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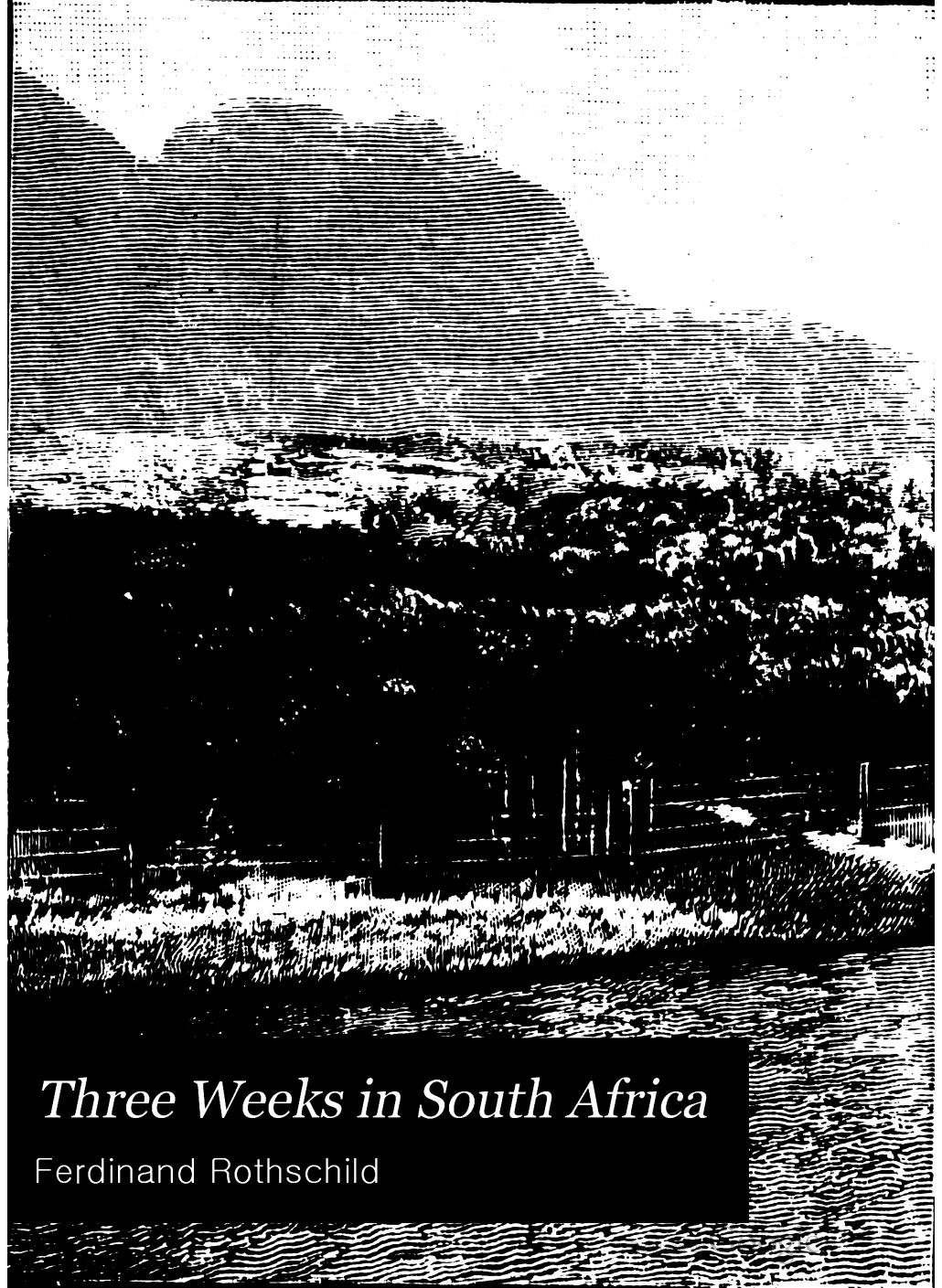

Three Weeks in South Africa

Ferdinand Rothschild

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1. Africa, South - Descr. and Trav., 1800-1900

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Three Weeks in South Africa.

A DIARY.

BY

BARON FERDINAND ROTHSCHILD.

PRINTED BY
MESSRS. HATCHARD, 187 PICCADILLY.
For Private Circulation.
1895.

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To THE HON. A. SCHOMBERG MCDONNELL,

in recollection of his pleasant companionship,

these pages are inscribed by

FERDINAND ROTHSCHILD.

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THREE WEEKS IN SOUTH AFRICA.

I.

The Voyage.

Dec. 6th, 1894, *on board the 'Dunottar Castle':*

SOUTH AFRICA had long haunted my dreams. My friendship with some of the 'adventurers' of our era, the explorers of unknown realms and founders of a vast Empire, their accounts of the diamond mines of Kimberley and the gold mines of Johannesburg, the prospect of seeing a new country, a new people, a new fauna and flora, no less than the general interest, both political and financial, created by the expansion of Cape Colony, worked so long on my mind, that I finally resolved to pay it a visit, and I accordingly booked my passage by the *Dunottar Castle*.

But when the day came to start, and in fact for

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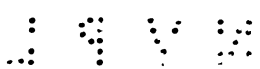
some days before, I was filled with vague and undefined misgivings. I felt reluctant to leave the comparative security of my own home and to face, not the perils of the deep—of these I never had even a thought; not the discomforts of a strange land—against these I could guard; but the various risks and uncertainties that were dimly foreshadowed in my mind, the long confinement on board ship from which there could be no escape, and the rather questionable results of an up-country expedition that seemed to bristle with mysterious difficulties, and, premature as it may appear, the necessity of having to undergo another long voyage in order to return to England. On the day of my departure, Saturday, December 1st, the weather was not of a kind to revive one's drooping spirits. A heavy fog hung over London and an unpleasant chill in the air presaged the coming frost. My travelling companion, A. M., and I left Piccadilly to take the early special from Waterloo to Southampton, and when passing my Club and my friends' houses I felt inclined to bid them a melancholy farewell.

At Waterloo there was a regular tumult of passengers pushing and bustling about, porters running



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backwards and forwards with luggage and parcels, newspaper boys, guards and inspectors by the score, besides a large crowd of artisans who surged in front of one of the carriages—the friends of the Reverend Mr. Spurgeon, who was going to the Cape for eighteen months for his health. As the train left they waved adieu to him with their hats and handkerchiefs, but to my surprise they did not raise a cheer. The fog lifted as we reached Winchester and my spirits lifted with the fog. At Southampton the sun shone brilliantly from a cloudless and perfectly still sky. My cousin, Mrs. Yorke, whose familiar and smiling face it was pleasant to see before we embarked, was waiting for me at the docks. We were taken alongside the *Dunottar Castle* in a tender at two o'clock, but she did not weigh anchor until five, having to wait for the morning mail from London. This postal arrangement is to be deprecated, as after dark the navigation past the Needles is somewhat dangerous and on foggy nights causes long delay. Could not all letters for the Cape be posted in London on Friday evening instead of Saturday morning, whereby the convenience and security of many hundreds, not to say thousands, of persons would be ensured?

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Mr. Martin one of the Company's officials came on board to see us off, and showed me over the vessel. She is about 5500 tons and 7500 horse-power. We inspected the first, second, and third class accommodation, when I found that the requirements and convenience of the third-class passengers are as carefully considered as those of the first, and on the whole it appeared to me a cleaner or better appointed vessel could not be desired.

Mr. Martin introduced me to Mr. Webster, our Captain, and his daughter, a well-favoured young lady, and to some of our fellow-passengers ; among others to Sir William Fairfax who is an annual visitor to the Cape, and to Mr. Cooper, the editor of the *Scotsman*, who is taking his first holiday after three years of incessant work. I was already acquainted with Mr. John Redmond. With the two last-named gentlemen there will probably be some political talk.

At half-past seven a hundred passengers sat down to a quiet meal, some time after which we retired to our berths. The huge vessel was then gliding smoothly over a perfectly calm sea, but when we awoke on the following morning in the Bay of Biscay we were rolling fearfully. The wind was not strong but

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a gale of some days before had left a heavy sea on which we pitched, tossed, and lurched, rose and sank in the most distressing manner. Eighty per cent. of the passengers succumbed to the motion. On the following day the sea calmed down but the next night it blew a regular gale, so that I never closed my eyes, being kept awake not merely by the rolling of the ship which almost tumbled me out of my berth, but by the clatter of crockery, the barking of dogs, and the quacking of some prize Aylesbury ducks which one of our passengers was taking out to a friend at the Cape.

We arrived at Madeira on the 5th at about six in the morning. Soon afterwards young Mr. Blandy came on board and handed me some telegrams from London which I was glad to receive. Mr. Blandy senior is a wine merchant, a shipping agent, and one of the magnates of the Island. For some little time we amused ourselves by throwing sixpences and shillings into the sea, watching the submarine evolutions of the natives, men and boys, amphibious creatures with heads like apes and legs like frogs, diving after them. Their skill is remarkable though not so remarkable as it appears at first sight, for the water is perfectly clear and the coin sinks slowly so that the divers have little

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trouble or difficulty in securing it. We left our fellow-passengers bargaining for wickerwork chairs and tables which heavily laden barges were bringing alongside, and went ashore with A. M., Cooper, Redmond, and other friends of Sir Donald Currie to breakfast with the Blandy's in their town residence, which is situated 450 feet above the level of the sea. It was like an English meal, served on sparkling white china and well-polished plate worthy of Mayfair, with the additional delicacies of mangoes, guavas, custard apples, avoganda pears and other semi-tropical fruits which, however, I failed to appreciate. The garden, interesting as it is, did not altogether come up to my expectations considering the fame of the gardens of Madeira, but I should not forget that we are in mid-winter and that Mr. Blandy's show garden is at his villa high up in the hills. Still the crimson and purple bougainvilliers, the bright yellow and scarlet bignonia venusta and crimson hibiscus were gorgeous. Pointsettias as large as our lilacs were in full bloom, and contrasted well with the white daisy trees. One large tree, the bombax, the size of a centenarian oak was covered with flowers of the shape and colour of some of our rarer specimens of

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white and pink gladioli, only that they grow in clusters and not in spikes.

After having expressed our gratitude to Mr. Blandy we went to Reed's new hotel which stands on a crag that juts out into the sea and commands beautiful views; from there to Mr. Blandy's office, who promised to send me two dozen of the finest Madeira that could be obtained, and then took a boat back to the *Dunottar Castle.*

My visit to the Island was too brief to enable me to receive any but the most superficial impressions. No doubt in the spring when vegetation is at its best, the forest ravines through which the mountain torrents rush to the sea between dense masses of semi-tropical foliage, and the villas and gardens that reach to the top of the hills must be very lovely. But probably even then the small proportion of well-kept gardens—of which there are few except those in the hands of the English residents as the natives only go in for cultivating marketable produce, such as yams, sweet potatoes, cane, and so forth—would militate against the effect of an overpowering horti-cultural luxuriance.

Funchal being built on a precipitous mountain-

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side on which a carriage drawn by horses would at once come to grief, a species of sledge is the only conveyance. They are drawn by oxen and guided by a boy in front who directs the team and a man behind, who is constantly placing and removing rollers made of some soft material under the runners of the sledge to ease its ascent or descent over the jagged stones of the pavement; both man and boy urging their beasts with a guttural cry, not unlike that of the donkey-boys of Cairo. These sledges are as comfortable as they are practicable, being provided with cushions and an awning under which you can shelter yourself from the rays of the sun, or the rain of which Madeira has more than a fair share.

Madeira is no longer the much-favoured sanitarium for pulmonary complaints it once was, and invalids—with few exceptions—merely go out there to die. That it could ever have been considered suitable for such sufferers seems to me, to say the least, strange, for owing to the incessant rains its soil is always reeking with moisture and its atmosphere is a vapour bath. To walk is an exhausting exercise, to sit still and gaze on high mountains on the one side and the boundless sea on the other is a

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poor enjoyment, and after a time almost sufficient to produce hypochondria. Fortunately for afflicted mankind it has been discovered at last that on high and bracing ground the phthisis bacillus prospers and multiplies less freely than in a low and confined place and in a relaxing atmosphere.

We steamed away at 1 p.m. and though we rolled a good deal for some hours we have had a smooth and peaceful progress ever since. It seems to me that the *Dunottar Castle* would take a prize from all ocean steamers for rolling. Is it owing to some defect in her build, the manner in which her cargo is stowed, the great force of her engines or the speed at which she travels—for she sustains an average of sixteen knots throughout the voyage—? I can't tell ; but I can feel. The captain, of course, asserts that his ship is perfectly steady and rolls quite imperceptibly, 'just enough to let you know that you are at sea,' as he repeatedly maintained—with many another yarn—over a glass of hot whisky-and-water in his cabin after dinner.

December 8th :

We are now steaming on a still blue sea and under a clear blue sky, in a warm atmosphere

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pleasantly cooled by the trade winds and the breeze made by the ship. The passengers have all settled down to perfect idleness; some to their novels, and others to whist at which they play morning, noon and night. The young and robust amuse themselves with gymnastics, cricket and quoits, but the thump of the heavy leather quoits on the deck is not calculated to soothe weak nerves. An Amusement Committee has been formed of which they have elected me President, Fairfax Chairman, Cooper Treasurer, Redmond Secretary, and A. M. Starter. This Amusement Committee promises to become a nuisance. It duns us all day for subscriptions to sweeps and various funds, it has invaded both the upper and promenade decks and hardly leaves me room for my chair. Its most energetic member is Captain Barlow, a Derbyshire breeder of hackneys who spends his winters at the Cape.

The first achievement of our Committee—a concert—took place last night in the second-class saloon. I sat out the first portion but was soon driven away by the combined effects of the stifling atmosphere and the quality of the performance. The star of the company was a Miss Titlebaum, an English damsel despite

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her foreign name, and the daughter of a Johannesburg tradesman. She was a huge muscular woman with enormous rough hands, a florid face, dark eyes, a colossal flaxen wig, a chignon the size of a pumpkin and the style of a second-rate provincial music-hall performer.

We have passed several ships; a French Trans-atlantique from the Brazils, a Union Company's cargo-ship from the Cape, and others. At sea these small incidents assume important proportions. The sight of a ship, moreover, is a welcome reminder of the outer world in this boundless expanse of water.

I have just finished the third volume of *Thiébault's Memoirs*. There can be no doubt of their authenticity but I am somewhat sceptical as to the accuracy of the details, for the most retentive memory — and Thiébault complains of his bad memory — could hardly charge itself after so many years with the minute details of innumerable trivial incidents, anecdotes and conversations. Thiébault was not altogether a soldier of fortune. He was the son of respectable parents, his father being a French doctor in Berlin during the reign of Frederic the Second and his mother

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a person of quality. At the outset of the Revolution when thirteen years of age, he joined the National Guard, witnessed the scenes of the memorable 10th August and then entered the army. Unlike most of Napoleon's officers he retained his republican sentiments, would never cringe to the Dictator, or solicit favours and advancement, was therefore cold shouldered by the Court and remained an obscure general. We must, perhaps, take these reasons for his failure to attain military distinction with a grain of salt. He may not have been a very capable officer, and not foreseeing the great future of General Buonaparte may have made a parade of his fine feelings of independence because he was not acute enough to throw in his lot at the right moment with the right man. He candidly owns that not only did he lose repeated opportunities of so doing but on several occasions bluntly and curtly spoke out his mind to Buonaparte. Unlike Augustus, the First Consul and Emperor never forgot these slights to the General. Thiébault was brave, witty, energetic and amorous, but vain, hot-headed, somewhat common and a braggart. A facile and versatile writer, his style cannot be compared to Ségur's or his humour to Casanova's,

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though he is often as interesting as the one and as entertaining as the other.

December 9th:

There is no mistake now about our being in the tropics. Our ship is canvased all over, the thermometer registers 83° in the cabins and though we are sheltered from the sun we cannot escape the heat. The temperature of the sea is the same as that of the air so that no freshness comes up from the deep. Still the atmosphere though burning is not oppressive and at night my cabin is positively cool, as I sleep with the port open and an air-shute fixed in it. The passengers are donning the most remarkable costumes, the men parti-coloured flannels without waistcoats, the ladies all kinds of loose fluttering garments. 'How hot it is!' is the universal greeting that soon becomes the monotonous refrain of every conversation. At dinner, in the saloon, however, it was hardly bearable and a punkah might most advantageously have been introduced.

No cricket yesterday fortunately, but quoits, everlasting quoits! In the evening we had a dance—yes, a dance! Can you imagine the eccentricity of dancing

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on board ship in the tropics in an atmosphere of 80°? But the young folks on board will have an outlet for their animal spirits, and ladies will air their finery though it be most unsuited to the occasion. One damsel appeared in a brown velvet robe adorned with ribbons and sashes of every hue in the rainbow, a second, in a gown of aquamarine satin, a third, in an aesthetic white night gown that reminded me of the Sonnambula. I did my duty and danced a lancers, but omitted to provide myself with gloves and when it came to the last figure, the *chaine anglaise*, I was painfully reminded at each step of the fact that we were indeed in the tropics.

We passed Cape Verde yesterday about eleven not far from the coast so that we could see the lighthouse and the sandhills covered with trees, but not close enough to distinguish the palms from the scrub. Fishing boats laden with niggers were cruising about and a stately bark in full sail moved majestically along. Shoals of porpoises amused our party with their antics. They appeared to me larger than their Mediterranean cousins and made tremendous leaps over the waves. Two flying fish foolishly flew on board into the arms of a sailor who skinned and stuffed them forthwith.

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I wish I had been present at their suicide, for until now I have seen but one of these interesting specimens of the finny tribe and his was a very poor performance.

December 10th:

Yesterday it was hot with a vengeance. The temperature was only 83°, but the atmosphere was heavily charged with electricity and full of vapours which came from the African coast. It was one of those days when life is a burden, and yet I was told that compared to many voyages ours is a cool one. Great black clouds hung all over the horizon and sheet lightning played in the distance, but a breeze sprung up and the threatened thunderstorm came to nothing. I was too prostrated to take my usual constitutional on deck and did nothing but doze over 'shilling shockers.'

On the preceding day I finished Froude's *Erasmus*, and enjoyed it all the more as I knew but little of the man. Froude's style is always attractive, though his exaggerated panegyrics of the Protestant reformers and the persistent mockery and invective he directs against the Roman Church lessen the force of his arguments and are suggestive of misrepresentation. He depicts the

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theological controversies of the day with a masterly hand, and he draws so graphic a picture of his *dramatis personæ* that the reader see and lives with them, and is surprised to find, on closing the book, that they once more become the shadows of a distant past. Erasmus was a religious trimmer and coward judged by the moral standard of his time. Froude's apology for him is that there was no reason why he should court the stake. Unquestionably it must be somewhat unpleasant to be burned alive, but great causes demand great sacrifices, and a man—'a great man'—who with his eyes open initiates a great national movement should have decided opinions and the courage of them, and should not shift to the shoulders of others the responsibility he has incurred of his own free will or allow them to suffer for following his example. Erasmus was brimful of a wit and humour not unlike Voltaire's, as Froude himself observes.

We have seen some flying-fish at last and in shoals—or rather coveys. They skim like swallows over the water for a considerable distance and when the sun shines on them they appear to be snow-white and look like butterflies. The best part of their flight is its end when they dart back into the waves.

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A. M. and I dined on deck and left our fellow-passengers to swelter over their repast in the saloon. We then went for our smoke into the Captain's cabin which was shortly invaded by some young ladies, one of whom has been a hospital nurse in London for eight years and is now going out to Johannesburg to be married. It is said that there are fourteen young ladies on board, including Miss Titlebaum, who are proceeding to the Cape to be joined in wedlock—but this may be an exaggeration. The most fashionable party on board are Mr. Ohlson and his family. He is a Swede by birth and an ex-M.P. at the Cape where he is now Swedish Consul and a wealthy brewer, the type of an effusively good-natured and contented self-made man. He is taking back a second wife, a Norfolk lady, whose relations are also connected with 'the trade.' Mrs. Ohlson is middle-aged, of a sweet disposition that manifests itself in a perpetual smile, and is on the most affectionate terms with three tall, graceful, and sprightly step-daughters, who were educated in England and through whom she became acquainted with her future husband. Mr. and Mrs. Ohlson and the three Miss Ohlsons and a fair young lady friend sit all in a row opposite me at meals

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—a happy, cheery, and united family, to see whom makes one feel homelike and comfortable.

Mr. Cooper is accompanied by Mr. Hagart, a Scotch solicitor, who is afflicted with rheumatism and is travelling for his health. On describing our respective ailments to each other we found, unfortunately, that our symptoms were entirely identical. But he bears his sufferings bravely and his quaint humour is truly refreshing.

December 11th:

For the present we have done with the intensity of the heat. The glass has not fallen but with the African coast the sultriness has vanished. Some tropical showers, too, have been welcome. Our young ladies played the whole afternoon at cricket, our young men at their quoits, and the elder ones at whist, nap, cribbage, and bezique. We are not to see land, nor are we likely to meet any ships until we reach the Cape. Flying fish have lost their charm and their performances no longer divert us, while the Amusement Committee has become the regular nuisance I thought it would. There will be nothing to relieve

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the monotony of the next eight days unless it be a storm, which heaven forbid!

We Crossed the Line at 2 a.m., but beyond the high temperature there was nothing to indicate that we should now be steaming under the Southern Cross, which, by the way, we have been forewarned is a fraud. No King Neptune came on board, there were none of the curious old traditional customs formerly observed on Crossing the Line over which I had eagerly gloated in my boyhood. They are now forbidden on board the *Dunottar Castle* owing to some unpleasant incident that happened on one of these occasions. Captain Webster says, moreover, that he objects to them as they lead to insubordination among the crew. The world has become miserably monotonous, every decade brings with it the destruction of some peculiar and interesting pageant. Even the sea—the great, boundless ocean—is suffering from the levelling processes of the nineteenth century as modern navigation enforces complete uniformity in shipbuilding, both steamers and sailing ships now being turned into mere straight shells or boxes and deprived of every ornamental or picturesque feature.

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December 12th:

To-day the *Dunottar Castle* has been transformed into a pandemonium. From 2 until 10 p.m. we were not allowed a minute's rest. At first I sought the seclusion of the Captain's cabin, but I was at once hunted out by a smart youth who presented me with my badge as President of the Amusement Committee—a blue and yellow rosette the size of a cabbage—which he pinned on my coat. Under a fierce tropical sun men, ladies and children ran races—flat races, obstacle races, potato races, played cricket, cockfighting, tug-of-war, bowline stretch, and every imaginable tomfoolery. There was nothing left for me to do but to howl with the wolves, or, to eschew metaphor, to join the sports; so I bravely took off my coat and ran old Hagart a potato race, which, as my antagonist weighed fourteen stone, I won—to the great satisfaction of my servants. But, alas! in the final heat I was matched against a young athlete who gathered four potatoes to my one so I beat an ignominious retreat. Less demented individuals than our fellow-passengers would have been content with four hours' exertion and excitement under such atmospheric conditions, but a gaudily printed programme announced that the moment dinner was

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over a concert would commence in the saloon. It has always been a mystery to me why young ladies with the feeblest voices, and who invariably sing out of tune, should be so keen to inflict themselves on an audience, and a greater mystery still why this audience should always manifest the most unbounded enthusiasm over such performances. Half a dozen young ladies last night vied with each other to decide which of them could emit the most excruciating false notes. Their faces paled as they went up to the piano, their bosoms heaved, their hands shook, their eyes watered, they looked pitiful pictures of suppressed emotion, they sang almost inaudibly and always flat, yet from first to last they were rapturously applauded. But so much I must say for these young ladies—that their performances were altogether surpassed by that of a young man, our 'masher,' who is always irreproachably dressed and wears a tail coat and white tie at dinner. He treated us to a music-hall song and the accompaniment was played by a modest young maiden frocked in white muslin and wearing spectacles. He knew the song as little as she knew the accompaniment, but undaunted they each went their own way, entirely regardless of the other as

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well as of time and tune. They reaped the reward of their pluck for the ceiling rang with cheers, and, had it not been that encores were forbidden, they would have been called back over and over again.

Dean Sheppard's *St. James's Palace* is sorry trash —a poor imitation of Law's *Hampton Court.* Still, to future generations it may be useful as a book of reference.

December 13th:

In some respects this voyage reminds me of my trip up the Nile. We rise every morning in an environment exactly the same as that through which we passed the preceding day and left on going to bed. But for the throb of the engines and the vibration of the screw nothing would denote that we were progressing a yard during these last four or five days. The banks of the Nile with their eternal mud villages, palm groves and sugar-cane fields, offer as little variety as this unlimited horizon and inanimate waste. Yet to be altogether cut off from the world — not to perceive the smallest vestige of human or animal life but flying fish—does

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not bring with it the sense of isolation I expected. We have grown so thoroughly inured to this watery imprisonment that I verily believe if, by a miracle, the last copy of the *Times* or the *Pall Mall Gazette* were to be waved before our eyes by an aerial messenger, it would create a feeling of surprise rather than a desire to peruse its contents. Our nature is so elastic and so subservient to its surroundings that objects we most value at one time we almost despise at another—not because of the diminution of our interest in them, not even because of their unimportance to our temporary conditions, but because they happen not to affect the community and circumstances in which we are living. Our vessel is a small but a self-sufficient world of its own with its three hundred passengers of mixed nationalities, its dictator—the captain, its legislative body—the officers, its executive—the crew, its castes—first, second, and third class; whilst its civilisation is represented by a printer, a hair-dresser, and a dispensary, and its luxuries by electric light, hot baths and every conceivable modern appliance. It is a world not only with all its vanities, for the gratification of which our Amusement Committee provides, but with its mental and physical agonies as

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well. One of our passengers lies fever-stricken in his cabin, another, a charming young girl of eighteen, is in the early stages of consumption, and, on the fore-deck, by the bows, clad in fustians and cottons, are men and women emigrants from England, Holland, and Norway — able-bodied, it is true, the men strong and muscular, the women comely, bearing on every line of their features the impress of poverty— straining their eyes towards the goal where they are to be relieved of their misery, towards that El Dorado of the nineteenth century Kimberley and Johannesburg, where fabulous fortunes are rapidly made. One of our passengers is a living testimony of this fact. But a few years ago he went out to Kimberley with nothing he could claim his own except the coat on his back. Now he is worth at least 50,000*l.*, and he proudly displays in his cabin a bag full of precious stones which he took to Europe to be set.

Last evening a Kimberley minister lectured in the second saloon on South Africa. His grammar was not perfect and he handled his 'h's' with much difficulty, but he was conversant with the subject and consequently rather impressive. His cheap pathos was

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less interesting, however, than his audience. There was real pathos in the intent look of expectation and eager hopefulness that lit up the features of all these poor folk as they hung on his every word concerning the land of promise to which their course is bent. May they not be disappointed!

December 14th:

Throughout yesterday we pitched unceasingly as the southern trade winds had freshened and curled up the dark blue waves. The motion made me very drowsy but I was forced to exert myself in a task the nature of which I never should have foretold. I would give you a hundred guesses and am certain you would not guess right. Well, it was to devise and then superintend the making of a costume for a fancy-dress ball that was to take place in the evening. At first I rebelled against the request of the members of the Committee to don a fancy garb, but was so hard-pressed by the whole body of ladies that I, 'vowing I would ne'er consent, consented.' It was hard to think of a costume that could be manufactured on board and would not look ridiculous. A happy thought struck

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me at last after prolonged cogitation; it was imparted to the head steward who seized it with avidity, and with the assistance of the stewardess, Mr. Hagart, who had consented to wear the same dress as I did, appeared with me on deck at 9.30—he as Cicero and I as Julius Cæsar. We were clad in tunic and toga cut out of bed linen, our sea shoes served as sandals and we were crowned with wreaths made from bay leaves. You would not believe that we were a decided success. Mr. Hagart was so delighted with himself—though he was christened Bacchus owing to his burly figure—that he remained up until past one, long after the revels had ceased. I soon slipped away and exchanged my classic apparel for the more comfortable garb of the present day. The ladies appeared as Japanese, Italians, Welsh peasants, Grace Darlings and whist cards, and were not so badly rigged out as might have been expected; the men appeared as cooks, ranchers, Jack Kidd's, admirals, and French marquises. But the hero of the evening undoubtedly was Redmond—Redmond in the character of a brigand. When I first saw him sipping his coffee in the saloon after dinner I burst forth into a wild uncontrollable fit of laughter, a manifestation which

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he deprecated. But it was too much to expect me to retain my gravity on beholding the leader of the Parnellite Party, the great orator of the House of Commons, the sombre, self-contained politician dressed in pumps and embroidered white stockings, a loose shirt fastened with a gigantic bow of Stuart tartan, a light yellow jacket bedizened with a multitude of buttons and ribbons, and a dolman slung over his shoulder, with a scarlet scarf round his waist from which countless revolvers and daggers protruded, and a Tyrolese hat adorned with plumes of pheasants' feathers. And yet on Redmond this costume seemed anything but absurd for he wore it with much grace and ease.

December 14th:

We are getting on and shall soon be out of the tropics. The ominous order went forth yesterday that the sports should cease at noon, and that the prizes be conferred forthwith on the winners. This means that bad weather may be in store. The distribution of the prizes took place on the hatchway, which was gaily decorated with red bunting and flags. As President they voted me to the chair from which very

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exalted position Mr. Cooper relieved me for a time in order to be afforded an opportunity of making a speech, which he did with much ability. The prizes, which amounted in the aggregate to the value of about 50*l.*, were given away by the ladies. Part of the money that had been subscribed went to the funds of the ship's band, which consists of some of the stewards, and the remainder to some seamen's charity. The less said of my oration the better. To speak in the open air, amidst the rushing of the waves and the thump of the engines, with so insecure a footing owing to the motion of the vessel that I was in constant peril of falling head over heels and finally with Redmond's eye fixed on me from the hurricane deck, was not very conducive to a burst of eloquence. But the audience was indulgent and every one who participated in the ceremony was cheered—Mr. Cooper, Miss Webster, Miss Ohlson, and the different gentlemen who proposed votes of thanks or responded to them, the Rev. Charles Spurgeon included, whose speech was flavoured with puns which I hardly expected from a member of the 'cloth.'

Alas! we have left the smooth waters and are now pitching mercilessly. This is a pleasant look out for the three days which still separate us from the Cape.

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Twelve Bad Men should have been entitled *Twelve Bad Tales*, as the authors of these various biographies have nothing to offer the reader but well-known facts and stale anecdotes told in a very indifferent style.

December 16th:

The voyage is getting very tiresome and now that the sports are over some of the passengers can find no other means of enlivening the time except by indulging in personal remarks about each other of a more or less good-natured kind.

I have been reading some of Mrs. Green's *Town Life in the Fifteenth Century* but did not get beyond the first volume, although the style is most correct and it shows much labour and research.

Clement's *Jacques Cœur* was more entertaining. Jacques Cœur was unmercifully squeezed by the King and the nobles, who, in order to repudiate their debts, afterwards ruthlessly calumniated him and sacrificed him to their rancour. Just as Fouquet was victimised by Louis Quatorze, subsequently the *fermiers generaux* were guillotined on account of their wealth, and just as some of my Paris friends would suffer if a chance

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offered to confiscate their property, so Jacques Cœur was plundered and abandoned by the King and his friends.

December 17th:

My birthday. Had it been prophesied to me that I should spend the fifty-fifth anniversary of my birth in the South Atlantic I should have scoffed at the idea. But it is the unexpected that generally happens. This certainly has been the most unpleasant of my birthdays as the motion of the vessel is beginning to tell upon me. What annoys me most is that, unlike the majority of people, who are ill the first day of the voyage and then become inured to the motion, I rarely succumb but never thoroughly gain my sea legs.

Yesterday was marked by a most distressing event. I had just finished my luncheon on the upper deck, was reading a book and smoking comfortably ensconced in a snug corner on deck when Mr. Ohlson shouted to me to move away at once. I could not make out what he meant and stayed in my corner, but when he was joined by A. M. and others who vociferously called on me to move, I reluctantly left my seat—only just in the nick of time. A tremendous

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wave had broken over the bows, sending volumes of water along the deck. Fortunately I had secured a safe place on the hatch and at first was much amused at seeing a stampede of stewpans, boxes of provisions and various cooking and other utensils whirling along on the torrent. Bare-legged sailors came fishing for our tables and chairs, my book, in which I was much interested, eluded their grasp and perished in the deluge. But my mirth was soon checked on seeing a man covered with blood carried past me to the dispensary. He was immediately followed by a second victim of the flood. We then heard that several third-class passengers had been knocked down by the wave. One had been severely cut about the face, another had his thigh seriously injured, and a third had been killed on the spot, his head having been dashed against the anchor. The poor fellow was a boatman from Algoa Bay, and helped to support his mother who has a small laundry at Plymouth. He is to be buried at sea—in fact, as I write these very words the engines are stopped and his body is being committed to the deep. I proposed to have been present at the ceremony, and should have been, were it not so rough that I dare not venture out of my

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cabin. A subscription has been made up for his poor old mother which has realised about fifty pounds.

Yesterday being Sunday Mr. Spurgeon preached a sermon in the state saloon. I was curious to hear the great preacher's son, but again I could not trust myself to move. I am told, however, that I lost nothing as his sermon—for which, owing to the sad catastrophe he had a grand opportunity—was spoilt by irrelevant jokes.

Shall we reach Cape Town to-morrow?

December 18th:

A dead calm. We are to arrive at Cape Town this afternoon.

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II.

Cape Town.

December 18th, 19th, 20th, 21st:

WE sighted Table Mountain early on December 18th and for some hours before we entered Table Bay I stood on the bridge eagerly scanning the outlines of the land as they grew into shape. Gulls, boobies and cape ducks swarmed in the air and on the ocean together with a sprinkling of penguins. Unlike the gulls which always follow a ship, the boobies and cape ducks keep in front of the bows, passing backwards and forwards and streaming in every direction.

Table Mountain with its twelve peaks—called the Twelve Apostles—gradually became more distinct, and Robben Island, the leper settlement of the Colony, came into view on the east. The prevalence of leprosy is attributed by some to a peculiar kind of

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fish which the poorer folk eat, but that cannot be altogether responsible for the ghastly disease as it attacks persons of all classes. Robben Island is also used for another and less grim purpose. It is the quarantine station for dogs, who are kept here for six months before they are allowed to land. I did well in not bringing out my own pet as I had at first intended. The mere thought makes me quiver.

Table Bay has been compared to the Bay of Naples but except for the graceful bend common to all bays and some faint similarity in the outline, I could not see any likeness between them. As we lay at anchor for over an hour waiting for the tide to enter the harbour the Master of the Port came on board and brought me some cables and letters. He was soon followed by Captain Ponsonby, the Governor's aide-de-camp, with an invitation from Lady Loch to stay at Government House. But even had I not accepted Mr. Rhodes' hospitable proposal in London that I should use his house while at Cape Town, I should have been obliged to decline her kind offer, having been informed in one of my cables of the sudden death of a dear relative, intelligence which cast a sad shadow over my first impressions of the Colony.

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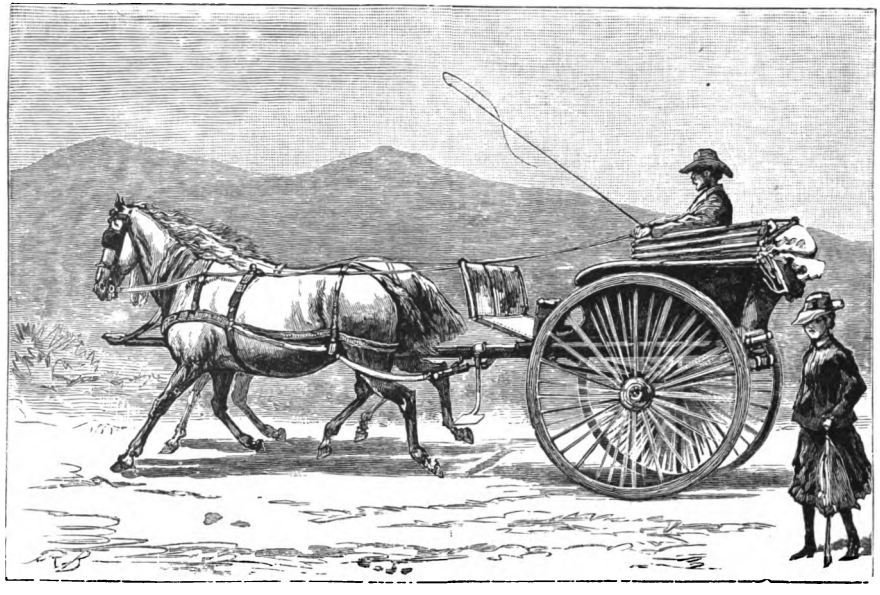

A Cape Cart.

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Captain Ponsonby told me that a deputation of the Jewish residents of Cape Town was waiting at the docks to present me with an address, and as we came alongside he pointed out to me Mr. Milton, the permanent ministerial Private Secretary to the Premier of the Cape. I was neither mentally nor physically in trim for a public interview for which moreover the time and locality were singularly inappropriate. Leave had to be taken of the Captain and officers and of my fellow-passengers, all sorts and conditions of people crowded the quay, so I beckoned to A. M. seized hold of Mr. Milton and slipped quietly away on shore, jumped into his Cape cart (a kind of curricle, very swift and very shaky) and went off at a rattling pace towards Rondebosch.

On the following day, however, I met the deputation at Mr. Rhodes' office in Cape Town. It comprised several most respectable looking gentlemen whose spokesman read an address, a flowery composition which extolled my 'virtues and the purity of my life.' I replied in less high-flown language but in what I trust were fitting terms, and afterwards sent them a letter of thanks with a cheque for the distressed members of the community.

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But to resume the thread of my diary.

My delight on arriving at Rondebosch and on finding myself in a quiet and comfortable home, can only be appreciated by those who have been seventeen days and nights on a rolling and tropical ocean. Mr. Milton and his kind and amiable wife had convened three Dutch ladies and Sir Charles Metcalf, the chief engineer of the Cape Railways, to dinner. However, being still very giddy from the voyage I was unable to appreciate any society, and, I am ashamed to say left in the midst of an early conversation and retired to rest. But all giddiness and fatigue had vanished the next morning when the rising sun streamed through my windows and drove me out of doors. No epithet in our vocabulary can adequately convey an idea of the exquisite delight of a South African morning. It has a charm and brings with it a relish all its own, which are not equalled on the Alps, the Appenines or even in the Nubian desert.

Mr. Rhodes' villa is situated near the high road on the slope of Table Mountain, about half an hour's drive from the town among groves of trees, chiefly pine and oak. It was originally a Dutch farmhouse, has been partly rebuilt and is now being much enlarged, and

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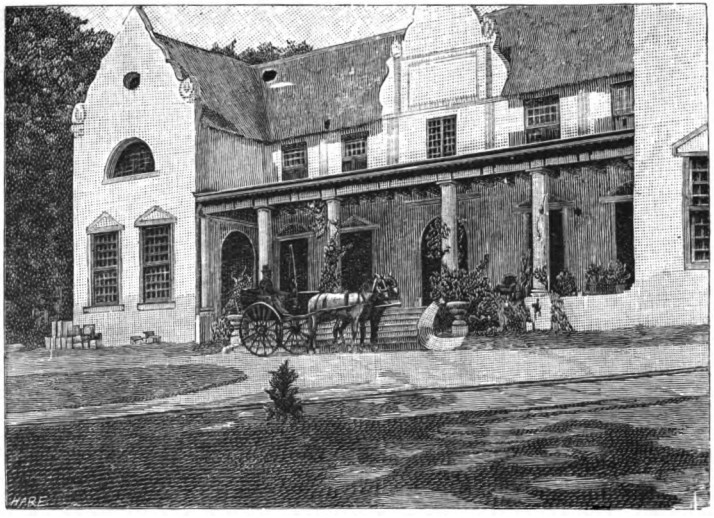

Mr. Cecil Rhoaes' House (front view), Rondebosch.

From a photograph by A. M.]

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when decorated and finished it will be a becoming residence for the Prime Minister. At present it is in a disorganised state, and is all in a jumble. Tapestries, and portraits by Reynolds purchased by Mr. Rhodes' father at the Duke of Buckingham's sale at Stowe, old Dutch clocks and cabinets which are being daily brought in from old Dutch farmhouses, relics of Lobengula and ancient ornaments in gold and chiselled vases and dishes discovered in Mashonaland, over which archæologists ponder in vain, will have to be put in their proper places. In every room there are cases of books, for which a large library is projected. The collection is a thoroughly readable one, including all the interesting publications of our time and the best translations of the classics. Terraces are being hewn into the hill at the back of the house, which is surrounded with gardens, a quaint mixture of orchards, flower-beds, shrubberies and trees. Beds are filled with ripe strawberries, while roses, hibiscus and gardenias are in full bloom, but the hydrangeas which are planted in large masses and which owing to the ironstone in the soil are of a deep blue, are the chief feature of the place. There are two large plantations of these hydrangeas, one in a dell—

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and rather too exposed to the sun to favour their growth and colour—and the other in a glade among woods mixed with orange trees, bordered with rhododendrons and azaleas. This when fully established will produce a novel and most striking effect. Round the gardens stretches a park, about three thousand acres of wood, scrub, and grass, through which runs a private turf-road five miles long leading to the public highway. The whole property is being enclosed in a strong fence and is to be stocked with every variety of antelope and deer indigenous to South Africa. A huge lion house is projected, but whether rhinoceroses, elephants and crocodiles are to supplement the other specimens of South African fauna may be an open question. About a quarter of an hour's walk from the house close by the turf-drive, stands an old stone Belvedere, from which a beautiful view is obtained embracing almost the whole of the Cape Town peninsula—an oasis in the desert of South Africa—across the low ground on one side with its distant range of hills, and to Table Mountain on the other with its twelve peaks.

Our time has been too short to admit of much sightseeing, still we did fairly well. The town is small and consists mainly of one long broad street

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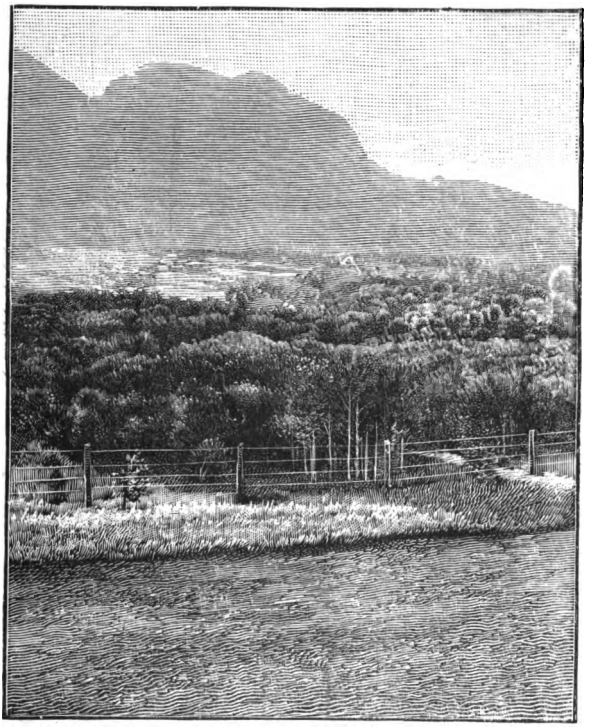

View of Mr. Cecil Rhodes' Park, Rondebosch.

From a photograph by A. M.]

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—Adderley Street—which is lined with fine buildings —the huge Standard Bank, Government House (the Governor's winter residence) the Botanical Gardens (which are poor), the Houses of Parliament, the new Post Office, and many well-stocked shops. Cape Town holds towards its residents very much the same position that the City of London does to the inhabitants of our metropolis. Only men of business, shopkeepers and persons of small means, Kaffirs, Malays and half-castes reside there. The climate of Cape Town is unpleasant at any time of the year, in the summer especially when the sun strikes back from the four thousand feet of perpendicular rock of Table Mountain, and the prevailing east wind raises clouds of suffocating red dust — that dust which is the bane of South Africa. Water-carts ply frequently between Cape Town and its long line of suburbs but the dryness of the air causes the water to evaporate almost before it falls to the ground.

Every one who can possibly afford it lives either at Seapoint at the north-west of the town, or in one of the many villages in the south-east, at Rondebosch, Newlands, or Wynberg, which succeed each other for several miles on the high road from the

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town. The population together with that of the suburbs is variously estimated at between eighty-five and a hundred thousand souls. Oaks line the road to the suburbs, which in the last century merely consisted of Dutch farmhouses and are now clusters of ornamental houses and villas surrounded by gardens. Higher up on the slopes of the mountain is the Silver tree, the only indigenous tree of the country which, in spite of every effort has never been acclimatised elsewhere, and does not even 'do well' when transplanted to the low lands. It is not a very beautiful specimen but is effective in the distance, owing to the contrast of its light and sparkling evergreen foliage with the dark needles of the pine, and, unlike other trees, it is far more attractive while growing than in maturity. By the ancient law the Colonists were compelled to plant oak and pine throughout the whole of the Peninsula and so stringent was this enactment that for every tree cut down two others had to be planted. The Cape oak which remains green for ten or eleven months of the year, has much larger and denser leaves and acorns double the size of ours. The Dutch when in want of brushwood not being allowed to cut down the oaks,

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pollarded them, which still further distinguishes them from those at home.

Cape Town and its neighbourhood breathes prosperity out of its every pore. Whites, blacks and half-castes, all look equally contented and happy and whatever the financial condition of the Colony may be its inhabitants certainly don't seem in need of pity. Nor are they to be pitied. They pay no direct taxes except a trifling local rate and a small customs duty. The State derives its revenues from Customs Duties which are said not to be protective—though all imports are taxed—and levied for revenue purposes only; also from licenses, the Post and Telegraph Service and the railways, which are the exclusive property of the State. The Excise is kept very low as Parliament dare not offend the Dutch farmers whose influence is great and who manufacture the poisonous Kaffir brandy —or 'Cape smoke' as it is called —which is degrading the coloured population both mentally and physically. The British artisan or working man earns from ten to twelve shillings a day wages, the black about a guinea a week. Under such favourable circumstances, the British artisan does not long remain a workman but soon becomes a master, whilst the Kaffir generally

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spends his earnings in drink. On inquiring how it is that so few English workmen emigrate to the Colony, I was told that work was limited and the number of hands sufficient. But how is it that there is so little competition, wages being so high? The answer may partly be that Englishmen will not work with coloured men, and either, as I say, at once become employers, or else they seek another field for their activity.

The state of agriculture in the Colony is nearly as depressed as it is with us and farming, whether wool, corn or fruit, no longer pays. Still, the farmer makes a living. The Colonists are very anxious to open up a market in England for the fruit which they grow in abundance—quince, peaches, and grapes. But we in England, too, grow grapes in abundance and we grow them the whole year round. The peaches cannot be supplied in London under fourpence each—and six or seven pence are charged there for Cape peaches—nor earlier than late in January or early in February. At that time the demand in London is limited, very few of the 'upper ten' are in town and banquets and balls are comparatively few and far between. As for quince, who in London eats quince? Still, on my return to England I shall inquire from our

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chief fruiterers whether the market for South African fruit could not be improved.

I have become acquainted with several local magnates—Sir Graham Bower and Mr. Laing, two Ministers in office; Mr. Schreiner, a clever, well-informed, and talkative lawyer, whose sister the authoress, Miss Olive Schreiner is now married to a gentleman who has taken her name and is living at Johannesburg; Mr. Fuller, the agent of the Union Steamship Company, Mr. Graaf, M.P., Mr. Hofmeyr, M.P. and others. Of these I was most struck by Mr. Hofmeyr, who is generally supposed to be a Dutchman but comes in reality of a Westphalian family which settled at the Cape in the seventeenth century. He is no longer young, possesses much social as well as political experience, is a cosmopolitan and not a colonial or provincial, and his talk is brilliant, light-in-hand, varied, and witty. Unfortunately, he is suffering from a painful complaint which he contracted in Canada last year while taking part in the Colonial Federation Conference and which precludes him from going much into society. When in office he refused to take any salary, in order as he said to preserve his political independence. He is now

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at the head of the Dutch Party and has long supported Mr. Rhodes. On the politics of the Colony it is not my intention to write much if anything. From what I saw and was able to gather in short and superficial conversations, it seems to me that they are almost wholly confined to local affairs—railways, negro and labour questions, and the relations between the Dutch and the English population. The Dutch as a matter of course are striving to preserve their ancient influence, while the English want to increase theirs. The Dutch are for maintaining the Transvaal and the Orange Free State as independent Dutch republics, while the English are for their absorption into or federation with Cape Colony. The Dutch—I am now speaking of the Boers, the farming and middle-class Dutchman—are Conservatives in the old-fashioned and objectionable sense of the term. They retard the progress of the Colony, are opposed to every reform and alteration in the old order of things and to British immigration.

We went for a long excursion with Mr. Hofmeyr and Mr. Graaf in a carriage-and-four, and our coachman was a Malay who wore the huge, heavy-peaked straw hat peculiar to his countrymen. We drove

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along the new Victoria Road to Hoot's Bay where we lunched at an inn kept by a Portuguese, and returned afterwards by the once famous vineyards of Constantia. The view from the Victoria Road, which is carved for nine miles out of the rocks and winds along the coast at the foot of Table Mountain, is very fine, and reminded me somewhat of the east coast of the Crimea. Much of it passes through heather, or, rather, heath which unfortunately was no longer in bloom. But the wild geraniums from which our pelargoniums and geraniums have been cultivated, and the lion-tailed plant, so-called from its long scarlet flowers, gave some little colour to the scene. The sugar-brush and the Hottentot fig which bears a juicy fruit having an astringent effect, were new to me. There were no trees and there was much dust.

During my stay at Cape Town I made a few purchases from Ayres the nurseryman, whose chief trade, however, is in bouquets, as it is the custom of the Colonists to present a magnificent floral offering to their lady friends on their return from Europe. My purchases included some new orchids and bulbs, and some pink callas from Pondoland, more peculiar

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and rare than pretty. Twenty-two years ago Mr. Ayres was in Sir Watkin Williams Wynn's service with my bailiff, Sims. He is also a friend of my cousin Nathaniel's gardener. How small is the world in which we live and move!

Mr. Ardern's garden is one of the show places of Cape Town. He is a Cheshire gentleman, a solicitor with a large practice, and a horticultural enthusiast. He has collected and established almost every tree, shrub, and plant from all parts of the world, but is more proud of his importations of the commonest English specimens, and is more ecstatic over his limes, maples, oaks and herbaceous plants than over his Californian, Japanese, or Australian rarities. I have the most thrilling recollection of an *auricaria excelsia* 110 feet high, with branches 60 feet across, an Australian paper-tree, camphor-trees, a blue Brazilian mimosa and several varieties of bougainvilliers.

Dogs are rare at the Cape. It is not that the Afrikander is less partial to the canine race than we are but the climate which agrees so well with all human beings and other animals, does not suit the dog, who is attacked by a kind of jaundice. The better he is bred the more liable he is to this

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fatal disease, while mongrels generally escape and survive.

At dinner on Wednesday at Government House we again met Mr. Cooper and Mr. Hagard, and on Thursday we lunched alone with Sir Henry and Lady Loch. For some little distance before you reach their summer residence the oaks on the high road form an avenue of unequalled stateliness and you drive beneath a green dome impenetrable to the sun and the wind—or rather to carry out my ecclesiastical metaphor—not a dome but a long aisle of thick verdure. Sir Henry Loch had just returned from the North and he told me in the course of an interesting conversation that he had satisfactorily settled the Swaziland question (unless Sir Ashmead Bartlett be of a different opinion). Lady Loch walked with me in the grounds which are not unlike those of an English park. This summer residence of the Governor belongs to a South African gentleman from whom it has only been rented for a few years. It is a thousand pities for visitors to the Cape and for the social amenities of the town—but, unfortunately, it cannot be avoided—that at the expiration of the lease the property reverts to its owner. The house is roomy and large. In the

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park, which is well timbered, English fallow deer, zebra and quagga make a happy family, huge turtle and large Cape geese mingling freely with them. Two splendid elands browse in a small enclosure.

Lady Loch is a great gardener and is justly proud of her achievements, but she too sets more store on her importations from England than on the indigenous plants and bushes, and smiled at my admiration of the latter. Yet I must confess that beautiful as semi-tropical vegetation unquestionably is, our spring efflorescence—thorns, lilacs, rhododendrons—beats anything I have seen in southern latitudes. But landscape-gardening which is sadly deficient in Cape Colony, or at any rate around Cape Town, could do much to improve matters. Gardens, though filled with oleanders, brugmansea, agapanthus and many other shrubs and flowers, are planted regardless of form, colour and size, where the exercise of the slightest ingenuity would contrive the loveliest effects.

This was nowhere more apparent than in the extensive grounds of Mr. Ohlson's villa which almost adjoin those of the Governor's Summer Residence. On leaving Lady Loch, we called on the worthy brewer, who with much pride did us the honours

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of his domain both in and out of doors. His terrace commands a view which recalls the one from Mr. Rhodes' belvedere, with the additional advantage that the eye rests in the foreground on flowering shrubs. Alas, for the lover of the picturesque! Two chimneys, the only two of the kind in Cape Town, rise in front, one next door to the house and the other out of the thicket. On hinting in the most innocent tones that perhaps they were not altogether in keeping with the scenery, Mr. Ohlson replied with a chuckle that those were his breweries, and from the smile on his countenance I could read that he was reflecting that to them he owed his property, his possessions and his pleasure. As for Mrs. Ohlson, she had already settled down to her duties and her joys and looked as if she had been born and bred in South Africa, and been mistress of Mr. Ohlson's heart and home for the best part of her life.

I have not yet mentioned the birds of the Cape. They are not, it need hardly be said, the birds of Great Britain. Seeing prews — glossy dark-blue starlings—flying about in great numbers in Sir Henry Loch's garden, I was doubly anxious to purchase some

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new inmates for my aviary but was precluded from doing so by the fact that there is not a naturalist or an ornithologist in the place. I was told that Mr. Bam, a Dutch livery-stable keeper, would be able to supply my wants in this line. His yard indeed was filled with crested cranes, secretary-birds, Cape geese, duck and various other interesting members of the feathered tribe, some of which danced round me in the most familiar manner, but Mr. Bam would not part with his pets. However, through the medium of John, Mr. Rhodes' coachman (the offspring of a Malay and a negress and a character in his way) I secured from a native a Kaffir finch he had just caught in the plains, and which he pretended to be very reluctant to sell for the sum of a pound though I believe the bird was not worth more than five shillings. These Kaffir finches which are not much larger than our chaffinches, and are of a deep blue with a yellow patch on the pinion, grow a long, bushy tail in the summer, which is so heavy that it almost impedes their flight; in fact it prevents them from flying altogether against a strong wind. It produces a very curious impression to see them on the wing as they can only move through the air by jerks and bounds.

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Stress of time compels me to defer until our return much that we should like to do and see now. But it will always be a matter of sincere regret to me to have visited the Colony in the absence of Mr. Rhodes. He is the life and soul of the Colony, its good genius, and I may add its dictator. He is feared, respected and wanted. But a man in his position has many enemies as well as friends. He has a political Opposition as well. 'Opposition,' in Cape politics, must not be measured according to our standard, for Cape politics do not assume altogether the same importance and interest, do not deal with the same great questions as ours; still under a constitutional system of Government where a Ministry comes into office by a majority of votes, there must necessarily be groups who want to turn out the Ministry in power in order to taste the sweets of office themselves. There are many capable men who now serve with Mr. Rhodes but who if it suited their purpose would combine against him. At present his name is on every one's lips from the highest to the lowest, whatever the subject of conversation or the occasion may be. My acquaintance with him is slight but sufficient to impress me with the power of his mind, the broad-

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ness of his views and the straightforwardness and unaffected simplicity of his character. These characteristics are to be seen in his every act—even in the laying out of his grounds. Moreover he possesses that personal magnetism peculiar to most, if not all, successful leaders of men. In statesmanship he towers over every public man in the Colony and if his health is maintained—and it is adamantine—he will bring the many great issues in which he is engaged to a successful conclusion.

Naturally I was anxious to visit a Colonial Legislature. The seventy odd members of the Lower House and the twenty-one of the Upper are accommodated with every comfort and luxury in two gorgeous and capacious chambers, too capacious in fact for the voices of the speakers to be properly heard. It was amusing to be shown into a billiard-room where two billiard-tables are provided for members, and to be told that unless they had some indoor attraction the members are apt to stray away from their duties.

The inhabitants of Cape Town are decidedly not to be pitied. They pay, as I have said, no income-tax and no direct taxes, they enjoy a splendid climate,

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they live among lovely surroundings and though wages are high, living on the whole is not much more expensive than at home. Parliament sits but three months in the year, M.P.'s receive about thirty shillings a day and travelling expenses, and they rarely or never address their constituents. If of an idle disposition they can sun themselves in their gardens, if of a sporting turn game of every kind and description is ready to fall to the rifle almost in the immediate neighbourhood, and if of a more adventurous disposition they can prospect at Johannesburg or aid in developing Rhodesia.

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III.

KIMBERLEY.

December 23rd, 24th, 25th.

ON Friday the 21st, at 9 p.m., we left Cape Town for Kimberley in a 'kitchen car' which Mr. Laing had kindly placed at our disposal, together with free passes for the whole of our up-country tour. On our way to the station we experienced the full blast of a Cape Town 'doctor,' as the easterly gale is called because of its supposed hygienic qualities. Whether we were any the better for it I cannot tell, but for the time being we were blinded and choked with the dust. The car (a saloon carriage provided with beds, a kitchen, a larder and apparently every comfort) was an antediluvian, ramshackle, ricketty shandradan. It rattled and shook more than the most dilapidated tumbril, and oscillated more than the smallest steamer propelled by the most powerful screw.

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In order not to be pitched out of my bed I had to hold on with both hands. To sleep was almost out of the question, and when the next morning the sun dawned on the Great Karroo I was a wreck.

The Great Karroo is a desert consisting of an everlasting succession of basins covered with scrub and brush, a thorny mimosa chiefly, enclosed by rocks as bare as the palm of my hand. On that desert poured the rays of the fiercest sun that ever beat on my brow and it turned our carriage into a furnace. The atmosphere became so oppressive that it incapacitated me even from reading or playing bezique with A. M.—our usual pastime when in straits for some better occupation — whilst the shaking prevented me even from dozing. The car was provided with an open platform where we occasionally endeavoured to refresh ourselves in the draught, but the glare, the dust and the clatter made it unbearable. Yet the Karroo has its qualities. Its soil is very fertile and could be most profitably cultivated but for the constant drought which is its curse. As it is sheep thrive on it, and large flocks—merino chiefly, as they give the best wool, which is one of the few exports from the Colony—roam amongst and feed on the bush. We saw but few

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of the indigenous Cape sheep with their long, thick, uncouth tails. Owing to the dryness of the atmosphere the Karroo has become a sanitarium for persons suffering from pulmonary complaints, in which cases it sometimes effects marvellous cures. The invalid young lady who came out with us on the *Dunottar Castle* is to spend this winter near Beaufort West.

No doubt, too, the Karroo has its fascinations, its mysteries, its passions and its glamour, which Miss Schreiner has so well described in her *Story of a South African Farm.* But in my condition I was unable to detect any of these attributes and could Miss Schreiner have heard the language I used she would have been painfully shocked. When we arrived at Beaufort West our thermometer registered 95 degrees both in the station and in our carriage, but on faltering out a few semi-suffocated words of complaint to the guard he replied with a smile that we were fortunate in the day for as a rule it is much hotter in the Karroo at this time of the year. While still moaning and groaning, a lady in white calico and a gentleman in a suit of dittoes and a huge straw hat rushed up eagerly and nearly embraced me. I was at first somewhat staggered by this demonstration, which however was explained by

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their being natives of Frankfort and by their delight at seeing a quasi-compatriot and a member of my family in the country of their adoption. When I had recovered from my surprise and spoke to them in German their joy knew no bounds, and I had much trouble in tearing myself away from them to return to my carriage. They are the innkeeper of Beaufort West and his wife, but they are not doing very well so that they intend seeking a fresh field for their energies in Mashonaland. Incidents of that terrible day there are none to record; and you will hardly credit it that my only excitement was the spectacle of a large flock of ostriches of all sizes and ages that had been brought from a neighbouring farm to feed near one of the stations. Our train which crawled all the time, partly because of the steep gradients, stopped incessantly, though only a few farmhouses were occasionally to be seen. These stoppages grow on one's nerves as they occur unduly often and are unduly protracted. The shortest is five minutes but the usual delay is a quarter of an hour and not infrequently half an hour. At first I welcomed these delays and rushed out of the carriage for some air and rest but the implacable sun drove me back into my furnace. At one

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of the stations I noticed a man whose face seemed familiar.

'Were you not on the *Dunottar Castle?*' I inquired.

'Yes,' he replied; 'and I have good reason to remember it.'

'Why?'

'You remember that wave that struck the ship,' he said, 'well, it killed my poor cousin and knocked me down.'

He went on to say that he was a Cornish miner who had availed of his leave to take his wife and children to England, and he was now returning to the Kimberley diamond mines, where he receives a salary of five pounds a week, of which he pays two for his board and lodging.

'But,' I interrupted, jokingly, 'do you not sometimes find it possible to pocket a small stone?'

His handsome Saxon face darkened with indignation as he replied, 'If I did I should get seven years.'

'But,' I suggested, 'you might not be detected.'

'Perhaps so, sir,' he retorted; 'but I have a conscience.'

We arrived at Kimberley more dead than alive after a most detestable journey of thirty-four hours,

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at seven in the morning on Sunday, December 23rd, and were met at the station by Mr. Gardner Williams, the Manager of the De Beers Company. He took us to our lodgings in the De Beers House, which is owned by the Company and hospitably placed at the disposal of its visitors, there being no decent hotel in the place. It consists of three bedrooms, a sitting-room and bath-room; in reality a wooden cottage with a roof of corrugated iron, enclosed by a verandah that is covered with creepers and looks on to the main road. We rested and bathed and then lunched at the Club with Mr. Gardner Williams and some of the members of the De Beers Company; Mr. Rabenau and Colonel Harris (Mr. Barnato's representative) among others. Mr. Gardner Williams, a powerful-looking man, is a native of California, and at first I had some difficulty in following him as he speaks much faster than the Cape railways travel. Still he gave me some very clear answers to my questions. I understood that the mines are worked on the following system:—The miners consist of whites and coloured men, the former receiving, as my Cornish friend informed me, some 5*l.* a week, the amount, however, depending on the number of loads brought to the surface in a given

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time. There are about 1500 white men employed—of the blacks more anon. The value of the yearly output of the De Beers Mines is about three millions sterling, and the diamonds are sold wholesale on the spot—not retail—to buyers who come from all parts of the world, and whose representatives spend the best part of the year at Kimberley watching the markets and purchasing parcels of diamonds according to the demand. France and America are the chief customers. This three millions, however, only represents the first cost of the diamonds as after they have passed through the hands of various middlemen, before hanging on the necks of fair ladies, they have realised at least four and a half millions. The white workmen live where and as they choose, and are unfettered by any restrictions. My Cornish friend's conscience must be an exemplary and exceptional one, for Mr. Gardner Willims informed me that about 150,000*l.* worth of diamonds are annually pilfered by the white workmen in the various diamond mines of South Africa. On repeating my conversation with the Cornishman to him, Mr. Gardner Williams remarked, 'No doubt he possesses a conscience and a diamond as well.'

The negro workmen live in compounds, one of

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which we visited on the day of our arrival. They are paid fixed weekly wages of about one guinea a week, but are engaged for a specified term of three, five or seven months, at the end of which period they are free to leave; though in most cases they prefer to remain on and sign a new contract. These compounds are large square yards situated next the mines and connected with them by a subterranean passage. They are lined with huts for the coloured miners, who are virtually prisoners in the compound during their term of service. To prevent them from disposing of any diamonds they may have secreted about their bodies in the mines, a high wire netting encloses the compound, so that no diamond can be thrown into the road. On Sunday the mines are closed and the Kaffirs spend the day in the compounds. Many of them were sitting outside their huts cooking on gridirons over a small wooden fire the meat they had purchased at the Company's store within the compound; others were bathing in a large tank which stands in the centre of the yard, and is not unlike one of our public baths. Close by is the hospital, for, though fever cases are rare, accidents happen occasionally. All the premises were beautifully kept

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and scrupulously clean. In this compound there were about 1300 Kaffirs from every South African tribe, and they all looked contented, happy and merry. Some of the tribesmen are hideous, others, however, the Zulus especially, are splendid specimens of humanity. Formerly the members of the various tribes lived together, but as this arrangement gave rise to quarrels they are now segregated.

A week before the expiration of his term of service the black workman is placed in solitary confinement and subjected to a treatment the details of which are peculiar. Still I may be allowed to say that every portion of his body is rigorously examined and he is plied daily with copious potions of castor oil. These precautions are necessary as the Kaffirs are known to resort to every expedient to possess themselves of the stones. On one occasion diamonds were found secreted in a Kaffir's leg in which he had made a deep incision; on another an extra strong dose of castor oil was administered to a nigger, on whom one of his friends had peached, and lo! and behold! twenty-eight stones valued at 1050*l.* were rescued from their entombment.

Some few years before the discovery of the

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Transvaal Gold Fields, Kimberley was considered the Ultima Thule of South African civilisation, the general meeting-place and outpost of the explorers, adventurers, and traders, who from here radiated and trafficked in all directions. But since the extension of the railways and the working of the Rand Mines, Kimberley has fallen off in importance and in population. It presents somewhat the appearance of a huge camp, its small white villas looking like tents dotted about amongst the greenery. But for one street which is substantially built and contains many well-stocked stores whose windows always attract a certain crowd, the town seems to consist of these villas, most of them constructed of timber with roofs of corrugated iron. The quantity of this latter commodity to be seen in this country —most of it is made at Wolverhampton—is really something to wonder at. With very few exceptions, there is hardly a building whatever its function, from the church down to the pigsty, which is not either entirely made of or partly covered with corrugated iron, and the further you travel, whether you go north, east, west, or south, corrugated iron and corrugated iron ever meets your view. More or less deserted as Kimberley now is, yesterday it appeared

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doubly so because of the heat. It is known to be one of the hottest places in the Colony although it stands 4000 feet above the level of the sea, and, so far, it ranks in my experience in that respect next to Beaufort West. While we were at dinner a thunderstorm somewhat cooled the air, and enabled us to spend a pleasant evening in the Public Gardens where a Volunteer Band — consisting of white miners — played a selection of music in a masterly style. In answer to my exclamations of surprise that such high efficiency should be arrived at amidst these very unmusical surroundings, Colonel Harris — who, by-the-by, is Colonel of the Volunteers — informed me that the band had received its tuition from an Austrian bandmaster, who, in fact, had only just left the place.

For the first time the Southern Cross appeared to its full advantage and though not a fraud, still it is a deception for it is no more like a cross than a square or a circle. The four stars which are supposed to form the cross and the two stars below, which are called pointers, are exactly the shape of a kite with its tail. But what militates most against the effectiveness of the constellation is that two other constellations of the same size and shape stand just above it in the sky, and

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for some time it is difficult to distinguish the one on which so much honour has been conferred, that honour being due to the greater brilliancy of the stars which compose it.

On Monday we paid our visit to the Kimberley Mines; being all exactly the same, we only visited one; moreover a diamond mine bears a close resemblance to any other mine I have ever seen, whether a gold, salt, or coal-mine. You first don a heavy coat and boots to preserve you from the damp atmosphere below, then enter a cage which drops you a thousand feet in the course of three-quarters of a minute. There, candle in hand — for there is no fire-damp and no fear of an explosion — you grope your way in the tunnel along which workmen are sending loaded trucks on rails in one direction and returning them empty in the other. Finally you come to the portion of the underground maze where they are excavating the mine either with picks or by blasting the walls of blueground, as it is called, though it is in reality lava.

For many a long year geologists, scholars and engineers have puzzled their heads over the origin and composition of the diamond and why it is found embedded in the bosom of the earth. Neither the

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Golconda nor the Brazilian diamond mines, however, strictly deserve that term as the stones are found in the beds of rivers into which they have been washed from no one knows where. In South Africa for the first time on record diamonds were found far down in the earth, and the story of how the first Kimberley diamond of all was discovered is so well known that it need not be repeated. All that can be authoritatively said is that during one of the epochs when the earth was being formed, volcanic eruptions took place where Kimberley now stands and the diamonds were thrown up in the lava. This lava or blueground —call it whichever you please—is brought to the surface and remains about a year on the 'floors' before it is subjected to any further manipulation. The 'floors,' let me explain, are large fields enclosed by a savage barbed wire fencing to prevent any intrusion; but though they are well guarded day and night robberies are sometimes committed. On these 'floors' the lava, which is perfectly hard when taken from the mine, begins to crumble from the action of the heat of the sun, and day after day is harrowed to and fro by traction engines and implements of various kinds; after which it is removed to the machine-houses to undergo

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the various other processes of crushing, working and sorting into mounds according to the size of the pebbles it contains.

To give a minute description of these processes would be tedious both to you and me, and as I am neither an engineer nor a chemist it would probably be somewhat vague or defective. More explicit information will be obtained from the technical report on the working of the mines issued by Mr. Gardner Williams in 1890. Let me come at once to the last process of all and the one which most interests the non-professional visitor. In a long gallery or workshop tables are arranged, round which sit a number of workmen, both white and coloured. The latter are not the regular miners but are convicts hired for the purpose under the supervision of white overseers. Each workman has a small heap of pebbles on the table in front of him, from which, with an instrument something between a shovel and a spade, he sorts out the diamonds from the pebbles and drops them into a little tin case at his side, not unlike a child's money-box. These boxes when full are taken into a small office and from there are afterwards conveyed to the General Office of the Company under an

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armed escort. A. M. and I. became almost excited as we watched the sorting and sifting of the pebbles and took the places of two workmen at the table for some little time, much to the amusement of Mr. Gardner Williams who scoffed in a Mephistophelian manner when we said we might discover a Koh-i-Noor. The fact is that great as the yield of the mines is, the proportion of stones to the amount of blueground excavated is infinitesimally small. When we were in the mine we took up several pieces of the clay as mementoes of our visit and at first apologised for doing so, but we were told that we might take as many pieces as we chose without profiting much as the proportion of diamonds is about one carat to a truck-load of clay. From the gallery we drove to the Company's General Offices where we were shown some of the latest finds. The first operation is to clean the diamonds by boiling them in a mixture of acids and when cleaned they are sorted with reference to size, colour, and quality, and made up into parcels worth fifty thousand pounds each, which are sold to the local buyers. One parcel had been expressly sorted and laid out for our inspection from the safes of the Company, in which there are 750,000*l.*

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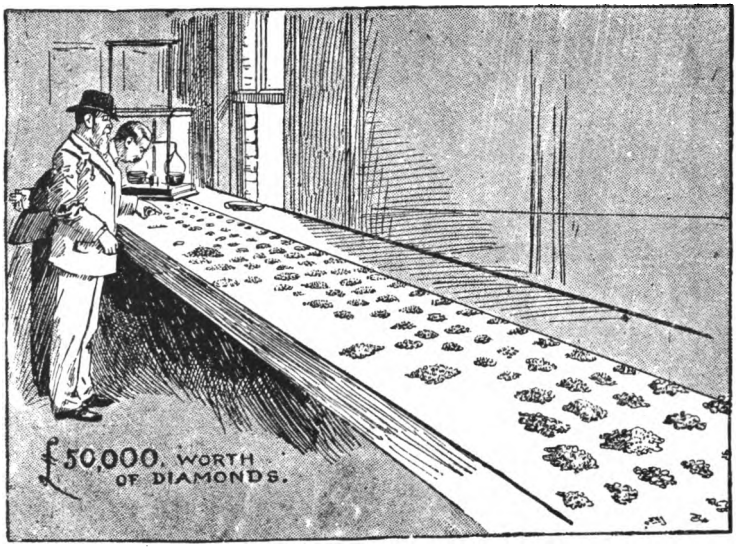

Diamonds Classified for Shipment at Kimberley.

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worth of diamonds awaiting purchasers. We saw diamonds of all colours—pure white, yellow, green, brown, and black—and models of the largest diamonds that have been sold which are kept in a show-case. Among these was the model of the one now in the possession of the Nizam of Hyderabad which gave rise to an interesting lawsuit. No more diamonds of an abnormal size are likely to pass into the hands of Indian Rajahs as the Indian Government will forbid, if it has not already forbidden, native Princes from squandering on baubles, however precious, fortunes which could be far better employed on public works.

As far as the most experienced engineers are able to say the yield of the De Beers Mine is practically inexhaustible, for wherever and however deep they bore the soil is diamondiferous. Mr. Gardner Williams' enthusiasm about the prospects of the mines seems justifiable as there is no ground for anticipating any diminution in the sale value of these stones. Since the amalgamation of the Kimberley mines the Company virtually commands the diamond market and competition is little to be feared. The Jaegersfontein Mines in the Orange Free State are the only rivals worthy of notice, for the diamonds they produce are whiter, purer, and finer than the Kimberley

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ones, but the yield is small. The largest and, it is said, the finest diamond in the world was discovered recently in the Jaegersfontein mine; it is double the size, I believe, of the Koh-i-Noor, but is still unsold and will probably be in this position for some time longer. It is now in London in the hands of a syndicate, and on inquiring its value, I was told I could obtain it for anything between two hundred thousand pounds and a million. My impression is that its ultimate fate will be to be cut up into smaller stones. But confident as Mr. Gardner Williams is of the everlasting prosperity of the De Beers Mines there is a small cloud gathering on the horizon, for Mr. J. B. Robinson, the owner of the Johannesburg gold mine which bears his name, has discovered and purchased a new diamond mine in the Transvaal which will soon be in working order. Of its prospects, however, it is too early to form an opinion, though Mr. Gardner Williams laughs it to scorn. At this moment the diamond trade is profitable and brisk and will remain so, to repeat Mr. Rhodes' epigram, 'as long as there are women in the world.' The stones may, perhaps, become cheaper as it might be impossible to keep up their price with a largely increased supply; still to me the continued de-

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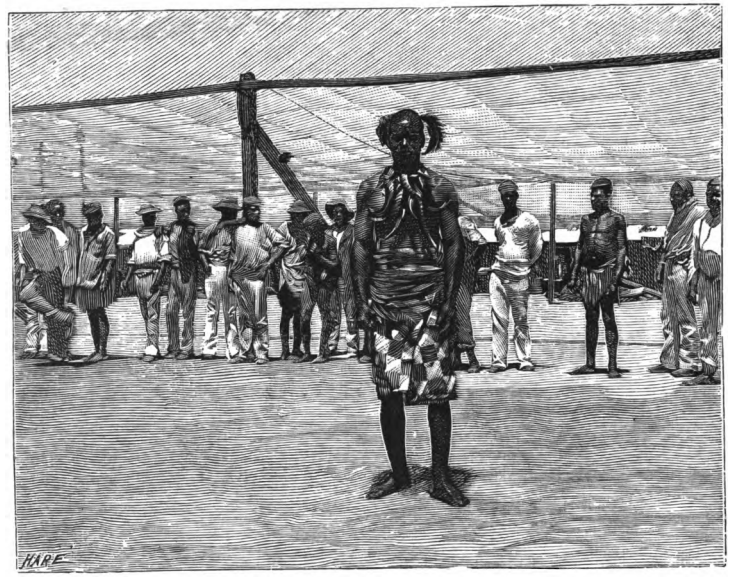

Native Chief, Kimberley Compound.

From a photograph by A. M.]

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mand is a marvel, even though it be borne in mind that the population and the wealth of the world are steadily increasing, and numbers of women are now decked out with diamonds who formerly had to be content with garnets. Garnets are plentifully found at Kimberley but being of no value are, as a rule, given away as presents.

On Christmas Day, after having received a deputation and an address from my co-religionists, we paid a second visit to the compound. Though early it was already overpoweringly hot and I hardly stirred from the shelter of the wooden gallery which surrounds the large tank in the yard. Christmas Day is the only holiday in the year that the Kaffirs really enjoy so that to come in for it was fortunate. For hours the black miners were engaged in athletic sports, which are managed by the Company, and for which prizes and money are freely given. Such a sight I never had witnessed and shall never forget, and to depict it adequately would need the pen of a Rider Haggard or the brush of a Gustave Doré. From 1100 to 1300 Kaffirs belonging to every tribe throughout the vast realm of South Africa, presenting every shade from brown to the

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darkest black, all healthy young men and tall boys, some attired in the most fantastic costumes, others draped in red or white blankets, many not dressed at all, stood gesticulating, screeching, laughing, ran wildly to and fro, or squatted on the ground in groups round the tank under the gallery. Some appeared as nature had made them but for a loin cloth or a girdle of dried herbs, others merely wore a kind of turban the end of which was drawn through a hole in the lobe of the ear. Some wore their national war dress, tall ostrich plumes waved over their heads, some a grotesque sort of kilt, an indescribable costume, half savage half European, adorned with articles intended for domestic use—scissors, knives, household implements of many sorts and of every description. One good nigger had three nutmeg-graters dangling from his knees, others had instruments of the same kind fastened through the lobes of their ears which in consequence were swollen to an enormous size. The ornament they all seemed to value and to adorn themselves with most is a large common white or black hairdresser's horn comb, either circular or straight according to the wearer's fancy, and coquettishly passed askew through his woolly hair. Of the

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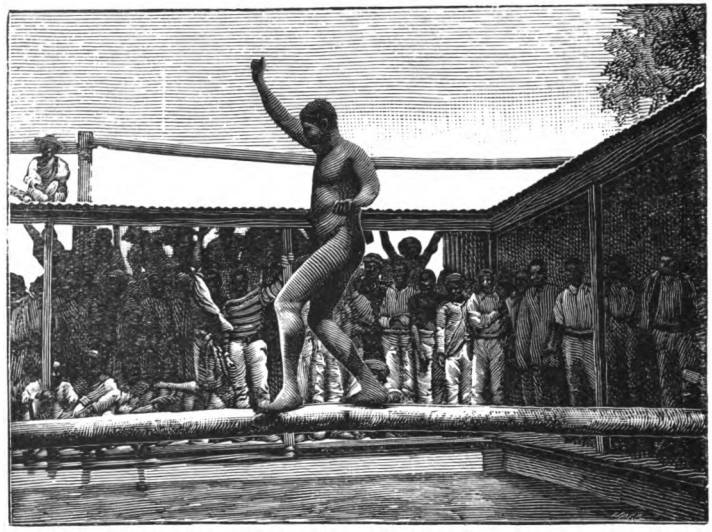

Kaffir walking the greased pole, Kimberley Compound.

From a photograph by A. M.]

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various sports the most amusing was 'walking a greased pole' which extended high over the tank. To see the audience alone was worth all the tortures we underwent in the Karroo. Imagine these many hundreds of niggers, their dark skins shining like oiled indiarubber, their white eyes glistening and rolling like marbles to and fro eagerly watching the sport, their huge mouths wide open displaying rows of immaculate ivory teeth; imagine them in every attitude and with every gesture but always graceful owing to the litheness of their fine figures — monkey-like, if you choose, with their squash noses, and lips swollen like bladders, and woolly hair, but Antinous-like in their shapes; imagine the brilliant blaze of their costumes heightened as it was by the pellucid glare of the sun, and you will have a pale and inadequate notion of a scene which was as fascinating as it was strange. A few only of the Kaffirs ventured along the pole, none reached its end; they fell into the tank with a great splash amidst the roars and shrieks of the crowd. When walking the pole had come to an end, a hundred at least of the dusky spectators threw off their scanty accoutrements and jumped into the tank.

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Mr. Gardner Williams, Mr. Rabenau, and other gentlemen connected with the Company were provided with bags full of shillings which they threw into the water. A wild scramble ensued. Up and down the black men bobbed in the water, diving, fighting, and splashing, groaning hideously and shouting vociferously; their long arms extended like snakes, their feet occasionally coming up like huge toads. It was a prehistoric scene in its every aspect and feature; it was a grotesque and picturesque but loathsome exhibition of uncouth savagery; it was a nightmare in broad daylight.

Before bidding a final adieu to the Kimberley Kaffirs let me say a word in their favour. They may be ignorant, they may be incapable of the same education as the white man, they may remain children to the end of their lives, but they are modest and moral, they enforce the most stringent laws against adultery in their natural condition, they are scrupulously clean in their habits, and with very few exceptions gentle, docile, good-tempered and easily managed. They always retain these characteristics unless they are brought under some bad European influence, which is chiefly exercised by inducing them to partake of alco-

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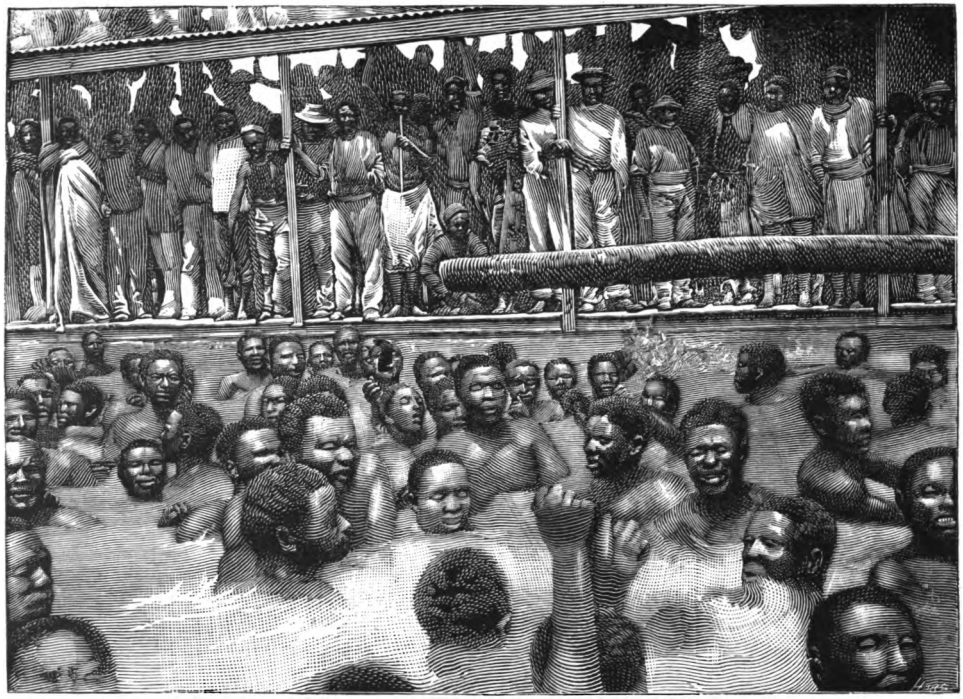

Kaffirs scrambling for money in the Tank, Kimberley Compound.

From a photograph by A. M.]

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holic drink, especially the poisonous 'Kaffir smoke' which even if only imbibed in small quantities has a violently intoxicating effect and drives the black man for the time being raving mad. In the compounds no alcohol is allowed, and with the money which the Kaffir saves, on returning to his kraal he purchases cattle, which in turn are exchanged, according to the amount, for a wife or several wives, who do all the work while he leads a life of happy idleness and contemplation.

While the blacks were enjoying themselves with their sports in the compounds the whites were similarly enjoying themselves in the park, but not being anxious to see an English tug-of-war or bicycle race at noon under an African sun, we went home for a short time and then drove with Mr. Gardner Williams to Kenilworth. This is a model village which has recently been erected a couple of miles from Kimberley for the use of the white miners and officials. It consists of small houses constructed of wood, brick, and the inevitable corrugated iron, which are surrounded by gardens; close by is a large park, which, when grown up will produce timber and afford pleasant walks and shelter from the heat. Extensive orchards contain

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vineyards chiefly, the vines being trained along alleys of trelliswork which extend for distances of 1000 and 1800 feet. The universal mimosa was in bloom and alive with a black and yellow finch that builds a long hanging nest like a weaver bird. Owing to his partiality for the grapes this finch, which at home would be an ornament to our aviaries, will have to be exterminated. These vines may prove a superfluous luxury for even should there be hands enough to gather and appetites to enjoy them, still no great profit can be expected from their export though that is one of the objects the Company has in view. Surely, considering this, the poor finches might be spared?

From Kenilworth we returned to luncheon to the club at Kimberley. The leading spirit of this institution is Captain Tyson, who has now spent many years in South Africa and has presented the club with a splendid collection of the heads of the indigenous fauna. His father was a native of, and if I remember rightly, Mayor of Folkestone and one of the chief political supporters of my uncle, Baron Meyer, who represented that borough. Again, I can only say how small is this world! He also told me that Randolph Churchill during his visit to

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the place asked him to procure for him, if possible, an ant-bear for my nephew Walter's museum at Tring. By a fortunate coincidence—for these ant-bears though not rare are not easily caught — one specimen of gigantic size happened to be captured shortly afterwards on a Boer farm, being dragged out of a hole by its long tail. The beast was dispatched with considerable difficulty, skinned and stuffed, and is now an object of delight to my Buckinghamshire friends.

On Christmas Day, at 4.20, we left Kimberley for Johannesburg, a journey of thirty-eight hours. Mr. Gardner Williams accompanied us to the station, as did also Mr. Rabenau, Colonel Harris, Mr. Moses and other gentlemen whose acquaintance we had had the pleasure of making. Mr. Moses is one of the De Beers officials and notwithstanding his Hebraic name is a Worcestershireman and a Dissenter. And so a very agreeable and interesting visit came to a close. We associate the diamond, if not with ideal, yet with fascinating or pleasant surroundings, but are apt to forget its history from the moment of its discovery until it graces the brow of a queen or even the shirt-front of a Wall Street broker. Still, it is

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very interesting to see the processes it undergoes until its final stage, as it is diverting to spend Christmas Day in the compound, while nothing could well be more stimulating than the energy of the white miner in that distant exile from his home and his family, or more gratifying than the care and the kindness bestowed on their subordinates by the officials of the Company.

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A Street in Johannesburg.

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IV.

JOHANNESBURG.

December 27th, 28th, and 29th:

THE journey to Johannesburg was less irksome than we had anticipated after our recent experience, though it was hot and uncomfortable enough. The scenery was as monotonous as that of the Karroo but of a different character. Instead of the arid basins of the desert we now passed through the boundless rolling grass plains of the Veldt. Few farmhouses were to be seen as the holdings are of a great size—from eight to ten thousand acres each—and those we saw were mean-looking, white plastered and featureless buildings, with an apology for a garden where a few stunted trees straggled round a half-empty pool. On the Veldt cattle and sheep roamed in large numbers, and the land is all dotted with anthills two or three feet high. In Mashonaland they are more plentiful still and of very much greater size.

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A. M. and I exerted ourselves to the utmost to detect something unusual that would vary the dulness of the scene for it was too hot to read, and we were weary of bezique. A couple of ostriches that had strayed away from their farm, some huge vultures—*aas vögel* as they are called by the Boers—owls and hawks of a large species, were perched on the telegraph poles where they roost at night, and a meer-cat, a droll little beast half-squirrel, half-rabbit—were all warmly welcomed and duly appreciated. We met with one experience that was not without some interest—we passed through several flights of locusts. When at rest on the ground the locust looks like an innocent large brown grasshopper and when on the wing it might be mistaken for a white moth—but woe to the country it invades for it devours every scrap of vegetation. The locusts are not an annual infliction but when they appear the words that Attila boasted of his hordes may be used of them, 'wherever they pass the grass no longer grows.' This year they are a perfect scourge. The swarms are so large that when you are in the midst of one of them you might fancy yourself in a snowstorm, at some distance they obscure the sky like a cloud, and they are so dense at times that they

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actually impede the progress of a train. They are followed as a rule by plover-like birds called locust-eaters, which owing to their peculiar intestinal organization, eat them by the score, but it would need many thousands of birds to make any appreciable diminution in the number of the locusts.

We reached Bloemfontein at two in the afternoon. Having lunched in our carriage we spent the usual stoppage of half-an-hour in the comparatively cool atmosphere of the waiting-room, into which we were followed by the holiday-makers and loafers and stared at as if we had dropped down from Mars. I soon found myself engaged in conversation with a Mr. Lloyd, a Welshman with a florid face and curly fair hair, who introduced himself as the principal butcher of Bloemfontein. He was most gracious and waxed delightfully familiar on the ground of being a brother-Mason and fellow-member of a Friendly Society. Over and over again he would shake hands and beg me to wire him previous to my return to Bloemfontein—where he said I must stay at least a fortnight—and finally presented me to his friend, a Neapolitan inn-keeper, who was overjoyed at having an opportunity of expressing himself in his native tongue.

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I was awake long before we arrived at Johannesburg and was up and dressed at six a.m. I had a good look at the approach to the town from the platform at the rear of our car, where I was soon joined by the Transvaal Custom House officer—an emaciated, quaintly-shaped, diminutive figure, with a dried-up, wizened, and furrowed face out of which shone a pair of small but bright and keen eyes. He told me, for we made friends at once, that he is a native of Ulm in Bavaria, that he had followed various professions and had been engaged in sundry financial speculations which invariably swallowed up his small savings. He seems now to have found a final and secure haven of rest. Being well known and popular in Johannesburg he receives many a tip in consideration of the wise discretion he shows in examining baggage and allowing not a few boxes of cigars and cases of spirits and wine, or silks and satins from Paris, to slip unnoticed through his fingers. Generally these tips take the form of stock exchange advice, which owing to the frequent and substantial fluctuations in the gold share market afford him many opportunities of turning an honest penny.

He informed me that a tremendous boom is now in full swing and all gold shares have gone up to fabu-

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lous prices. Simmer and Jack, which were quoted at seven when I left London, are now at fifteen. Then the droll little chap pointed out the features of the country, or rather of the suburbs of Johannesburg. They are not unlike those of an English manufacturing town as they consist of artisans' dwellings, workshops, and chimneys, but in one notable respect they differ from those at home for, instead of being shrouded in smoke and fog and smothered with soot, they shone clear and bright in the brilliant and brisk atmosphere. At 6.30 a.m. we steamed into the station and were met by two gentlemen, one of whom as a matter of course, was the head of one of the Jewish congregations who came to beg me to appoint an hour for the reception of a deputation; the other was Mr. Abe Bailey. With the latter we drove off to the Western Hotel.

Mr. Bailey returned at nine o'clock when we had refreshed ourselves with copious ablutions and a copious breakfast, and took us for a drive in the town and its immediate neighbourhood. It lies in a valley, or rather, basin, which forms part of the Rand, and adjoining it is a much larger basin in which the mines are situated—but of these more anon. Johannesburg

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has a Club for no English-speaking town would be complete without an institution of this kind. It is in a flourishing condition and numbers 600 members. We lunched there in a private room with Mr. Bailey and several of his friends, the chief notabilities of the place. A few words of description of our host and of some of his guests may not be amiss.

Mr. Abe Bailey is the best type of the Afrikander. He was born in Cape Town as was his father before him, and is therefore a Colonial in the real sense of the word. Nevertheless, he and almost every other British Afrikander I met speaks of England invariably as 'home,' and he appears to look on South Africa in the light of a temporary abode though all his interests and possessions are in the Colony. I thought at first that Mr. Bailey referred to Cape Town and it may be taken as a wholesome expression of good feeling and allegiance to the mother-country that not merely residents but the natives of the Colony are anxious to preserve their connexion with Great Britain, and look on it as their home. Short, spare, well-set-up, and wiry, his face tanned by constant exposure to the weather, with clear eyes that look you straight in the face,

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devoted to sport—shooting, hunting, and racing—a keen man of business, fond of every kind of mental and physical enterprise and adventure, genial, always ready with the most lavish hospitality, and aged 29—so I may sum up the chief characteristics of Mr. Bailey. When only a boy, some ten years ago, he started on his career with the proverbial shilling in his pocket, and by the ability he showed in various speculations he has made a large fortune. Six months ago he married the pretty daughter of a prosperous Cape Town merchant and they reside in a villa in the suburbs of Johannesburg. He has many horses in training, beats his opponents at billiards, shoots elephants and antelopes during the intervals of business, and when at home entertains his friends and visitors at dinner. Next to Mr. Bailey may be mentioned Mr. Hammond, always most trimly dressed, and from 40 to 45 years of age. He is Consulting Engineer to the Consolidated Gold Mines of South Africa with a salary of ten thousand a year. Fond of good cigars, good wine, and good food, with a pleasant address, polished manner and varied conversation, he is remarkably able and eminently cautious in his judgments. My continued efforts to

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elicit from him an opinion on the merits or demerits of the various mines, of their individual capacities for production and the probable maintenance of their existing high prices, met with the most discreet responses. Mr. Perkins holds a similar position in connexion with the Rand Mines, he like Mr. Hammond being an American and receiving the same salary. He is a more typical Yankee, according to the accepted idea, than Mr. Hammond, and is held to be one of the ablest managers and experts of the Rand. Unfortunately I had but few opportunities of conversing with him, but I gathered from him, as I did from Mr. Bailey, Mr. Hammond, and in fact all the leading men of the place, that the great 'boom' which so delighted my friend the Customs officer is at an end, and that sooner or later a reaction must take place.* Great fortunes have just been made and consequently the Johannesburg gentlemen were in high state of exultation — a fact that conduced not a little to the enjoyment of our stay in their midst. Still, though they prophesy in this way and though it is un-

* Note, March 25th.—This prediction is not yet fulfilled. The 'boom' still continues.

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questionable that some of the shares have been puffed up to a point altogether out of proportion to the trustworthiness of some of the mines or the dividends they pay, they don't expect that the reaction when it comes will be as severe as the one which took place some ten years ago, for the reason that a large portion of the shares have been bought for investment. However that may be, one thing is clear, that the market is in the hands of a few gentlemen whose power, if not to be compared to that of the American railway kings, yet to a great extent they control the rise and fall of the shares. But to return to the other guests. There was Mr. Phillipps, a partner in Messrs. Eckstein & Co.; Mr. Joel, a nephew of Mr. Barnato's, a very young man still, who began life penniless but is now Mr. Barnato's partner and a millionaire, and said to be one of the straightest as well as the shrewdest judges of the markets. Then there were the two brothers Leonard, both lawyers, the elder of whom, a tall handsome man, is considered the cleverest legal expert in the Transvaal. An Afrikander by birth, politically he is an English jingo of the most pronounced type and in the course of a long conversation he deplored, in very ornate

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language, the neglect by the mother-country of her South African offspring, to which he would like her to extend more political and pecuniary consideration; Mr. Mein, the Manager of the Robinson's Mine, and finally, Captain Ernest Rhodes, Mr. Cecil Rhodes' brother and representative, who is quite unlike his brother in appearance. He too lives in a villa with a large garden, that was once a lonely Dutch farm-house in the veldt, and where he had kindly invited us to stay during my visit to Johannesburg, an invitation, however, we declined, preferring the independence of an hotel. I have only a vague recollection of Mr. Bailey's other English, German, French, and American guests. They were the minnows among the whales. Men of all classes and nationalities, all speculators, all thriving, all hospitable, all living in perfect harmony with each other, all manifesting the greatest pride in the prosperity of the town which they have created and all forming a mutual admiration society, extolling the marvels of Johannesburg; a patriotic and pardonable foible they share with almost every Afrikander in his particular town.

When luncheon was over we strolled in the streets and later on accompanied by Mr. Bailey went to see

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one of the sights of the town, if that term can be applied to a very reputable establishment, the fashionable tea-house of Johannesburg. Do not conjure up in your mind visions of a Japanese teahouse in some picturesque locality. Practically it is merely a public-house though it does not go by that appellation. What distinguishes it from a gin-palace is that most of its customers ask for the cup 'that cheers but not inebriates' in preference to alcoholic beverages. Whether you take tea, brandy and soda, or a glass of whisky, you are accommodated with a comfortable arm-chair and a neatly appointed table; and moreover you are afforded the society and conversation of one of the two presiding goddesses of the shrine—barmaids I dare not call them. They are sisters, not unlike Miss Titlebaum of the *Dunottar Castle* in appearance, formerly belonging to a troupe of actors with whom they came to Johannesburg. However, they found it more profitable to join the 'trade,' even if assuaged by tea, than to remain on the boards, and, more profitable still to exercise their wiles and fascinations on the not altogether inexperienced residents of Johannesburg. In the evening we dined again with Mr. Bailey at the Club, a monster repast

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both in point of the number of guests and of dishes, served in a private room of lilliputian dimensions and consequently suffocatingly hot. We again met some of the same gentlemen who had been present at luncheon, and others whose names have faded out of my memory.

Friday, 28th December, was a well-filled day. There are three or four Jewish congregations at Johannesburg. I promised to receive a deputation from one of these at six on the evening of the day of my arrival. But the Secretary of the most important congregation in the place had also requested me to receive a deputation from his body, and I had replied that I should be willing to do so at nine the following morning at the Synagogue. So to the Synagogue I went at the appointed time, but the Synagogue was empty. Having repeatedly rung the bell in vain I at last came across a timid individual, who said he knew nothing about me or my deputation but that he would fetch the minister, who lived in the immediate vicinity. Meanwhile, I solaced myself by talking to the schoolmaster and to the school-children who were learning their lessons in a room adjoining the Synagogue, and who were duly made to show off by

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singing some glees and hymns. No children of their class could have been cleaner, more neatly dressed and generally of a more refined type. Many were fair-haired, and had quite an Anglo-Saxon look, and of these some were the children of Russian immigrants. At last, rubbing his eyes, the minister turned up, having evidently been disturbed in his slumbers or from his theological studies, and looking very much askance at me. My letter, he said, had not come to hand, it must have been incorrectly addressed or the messenger had taken it to the wrong person, but if I would wait he would collect the members of the deputation, and then the address would be duly presented, &c., &c. But an hour at least must elapse before the deputation could make their appearance; every minute of our time had been planned out, and we were expected at ten at the Robinson Mine. We all looked very foolish, the minister and I haranguing each other, the schoolmaster and his pupils gaping at us from the green, and A. M. grinning down from the landau. I waxed rather wroth, and left the place abruptly, advising the minister to manage things better on another occasion. Late in the evening a large parcel was delivered to me at the hotel. It contained the address, which was magnificently illu-

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minated and suitably framed, and with it was a note stating that my letter had not yet been received. I felt truly sorry for the mishap, vented my choler on the hall-porter and wrote a reply to the donors couched in the most grateful terms, accompanied by a cheque for the poor. Thus a ridiculous episode came to what I trust was a satisfactory finale.

A. M. and I drove off from the Synagogue to visit the famous Robinson Mine which is situated at one extremity of the Gold Mining District. I do not propose to enter into a description either of the Mine or of the manner of its working, being no expert in such matters. Our visit, into the bargain, was not a very protracted one for the heat had now become almost intolerable, and however interesting sightseeing may be there can be no pleasure in being shown things you do not and cannot understand, and having processes explained which no amount of explanation can drive into your mind in a tropical temperature. Our cicerone was Mr. Mein, an American, like most of the Johannesburg mine managers and engineers. Not old but a very old-looking man, very tall, very thin, very wizened, and very clever. So much I must say—that the working of the mine is to be largely increased,

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a great number of new stamps being in process of erection. Much of the machinery had been imported from America, it being both cheaper and better than English machinery, though for some special purposes connected with the mines British plant is preferred. Perhaps the most remarkable feature of the works is the new Cyanide process somewhat recently invented in England, but here employed for the first time on a large scale. By this process fifteen shillings worth of gold is saved from each ton of tailings which previously was treated as waste. But yet it is known that a certain amount of gold still remains in the tailings even after they have been treated by the cyanide process, which doubtless some chemist will discover a method of saving before very long. Half dead with heat and blind with the glare we drove to the compound where the coloured miners reside, though they are not kept in the same rigorous imprisonment as at Kimberley. I amused myself by throwing a few shillings into the crowd—they had just returned from dinner—and they fought for the coin like children after which they gave a loud cheer but by no means an English cheer. There was no hurrahing! but a peculiar burring sound, a combination of a hoarse

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shout and a suppressed bark, which, coming from so many human throats, made a very singular effect. Cheering with them it seems is a national custom and is not the outcome of their association with the British. We lunched with Captain and Mrs. Rhodes, and then went for a long drive, A. M. and the Captain in a landau, Mr. Hammond and I in his Cape cart, along the mining district of the Rand.

The Rand—the gold-mining district—is a large, oval-shaped and irregular basin, close to the one in which the town lies. It is from forty to sixty miles long and fifteen to twenty miles wide. The formation is quartz, the best and richest formation for gold. The reefs extend all round the ridges of the basin almost up to the surface of the ground and go down, it is said, to unfathomable depths in the centre of the basin. At present, the upper crust, the high levels only are being worked, but from borings which have been made all over the Rand the deep levels are known to be as auriferous as the upper ones, and when these latter become more or less exhausted the turn of the deep levels will come. Although the shares in the deep levels do not yet pay any interest they are quoted at a very high figure. No doubt their yield will be very

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considerable but it must not be forgotten that the deeper you work into the ground the greater is the difficulty and the expense. The mines with their workshops and chimneys extend about half round the basin and in a few years' time will form a complete circle. Many of these mines are unquestionably a good security and their yield for some years is secure, others are purely speculative and very uncertain, as some gold reefs which at first are most plentiful, for some unimaginable reason suddenly 'peter out.' Geologists and engineers puzzle their heads as fruitlessly over the origin of the gold mines of Johannesburg as they do over the diamond mines of Kimberley. A similar formation is unknown in any part of the world. Gold is found in alluvial deposits oftener than quartz and it remains to be seen whether the gold mines of Rhodesia are of the Californian or of the Johannesburg pattern. All this and very much more was shown and explained to me by Mr. Hammond in the course of our drive, during which, much to my regret, I noticed that large canteens stood next each of the mines where the unfortunate native is poisoned and maddened with drink. Could not the Government of the Transvaal be induced to pass a

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law preventing the sale of this villainous stuff to the natives as is done at Kimberley? On our way back we were overtaken by a thunderstorm which cooled the air and laid the dust, but we were spared the sight of one of the great dust-storms which are of such frequent occurrence both at Kimberley and Johannesburg and which, though detestable as they obscure the atmosphere as much as a yellow fog does in London, would still have been for once a curious experience. The Rand, let me finally say, might be compared to a combination of Newcastle and Wimbledon. Johannesburg itself mainly consists of villas or at any rate of houses surrounded by gardens situated on sloping ground and bearing some resemblance to the general aspect of Wimbledon, while the long line of chimneys and workshops which surround the Rand are not unlike one of our manufacturing towns.

At half-past seven we dined with Mr. and Mrs. Bailey at their delightful residence. The party consisted of the usual people with whom we afterwards went off to Phillis's Circus. The performance was a very creditable one, though more attractive for the number and variety of tamed wild beasts than for the feats of the

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equestrians of both sexes. An American animal tamer put a party of lions and lionesses through their evolutions in a huge cage, which was surrounded by men armed with rifles at full cock. This precaution is needed as on some former occasion the tamer had been attacked by a huge lion, and, but for the instantaneous firing by one of the men it might have gone hard with him. Fortunately for the beast, the bullet only grazed it and blinded one of its eyes, but it has become so savage that it is no longer allowed to take part in the performance. When the performance was over we visited the lion, together with a number of the other animals, and, on seeing the tamer, the poor maimed beast flew at the bars of its cage with a loud roar, for it is now in solitary confinement. Such a heterogenous collection of animals is seldom to be seen. Malay, Java, and Shetland ponies were eating out of the same manger and elephants of all sizes enjoyed their supper of hay. There were monkeys that turned somersaults, trained zebras, quaggas, kangaroos, pigs and an Australian hairless mare; carnivorous animals of all sorts—among them a tame tiger which I was invited to pat on the back. I did so though I confess not without some inward feeling of reluctance. Still, now I can say that

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I patted a tiger! At eleven o'clock we retired to rest thoroughly tired out.

The next morning Mr. Bailey appeared soon after breakfast to take us to visit Mr. Lippert. Mr. and Mrs. Lippert are natives of Hamburg, and are of the purest and truest specimens of the North German race. Mining enterprise brought him to Johannesburg, by which he is said to have lost money, but he has made a considerable fortune from the concession of the monopoly for the manufacture of dynamite in the Transvaal, that article being extensively used in mining operations. They are both sighing for the day of their return to the Fatherland—a day which need not be far distant, as their means are ample, they have no family to provide for, and there is not much to detain them in South Africa. Of the two, it is said that the lady has the brains; and she is unquestionably a good housewife as was evident from the dainties she offered us, chief among which we appreciated some excellent German gingerbread. Like most Germans, Mr. Lippert is an enthusiastic forester. He has formed a Company with a capital of 70,000*l.*, in which he is the chief shareholder, for the purchase of a considerable tract of land to be devoted to farming, building and

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forestry. The farms do not and probably will not pay, but the forestry portion of the estate is likely to prove a success. About 1500 acres have been planted with wood, eucalyptus and pinus insignis, which when fully grown will afford useful timber for the mines, for hedges and for various building purposes. Though sown only four years ago they already present quite a venerable appearance as trees in this climate grow from five to ten feet in a year. The heat now became very trying, yet Mr. Lippert took us through every part of his wood and looked somewhat irate as my enthusiasm did not come up to his expectation. But with the best will in the world I could not go into ecstacies over the yearly growth of every pine and every eucalyptus. Mr. Lippert is undoubtedly a benefactor to Johannesburg, and future generations when reposing in the shade of the present saplings may well set up a statue to his memory. However, the matter of the statue is perhaps after all somewhat questionable, as he is not the only benefactor in this line. As far as the eye can reach in the town trees are rapidly rising from what was formerly bare ground around the villas, in the public park and gardens, around every public edifice, almost along every street and every road.

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We went home and exchanged our flannels for more suitable apparel and then we drove off to the races. It was not Johannesburg, it was Ascot or Doncaster. Ascot for the brilliancy of the company, the smart gentlemen and the smarter ladies—the stand, enclosure, paddock, ring, in fact all the features of Ascot race-course; and Doncaster for the distant, picturesque view of the wild plains. There was the same betting, the same crowds, the same ring-men, I may almost say the same racehorses, while most of the jockeys come from England, with one peculiar exception, namely Mr. Bailey's jockey who is a Bushman, a race that like the Hottentot is becoming nearly extinct. He is a dwarf, about four feet high, with a numerous family and is a grandfather. Last though not least, there were the same tents and the same luncheon as at Ascot or Doncaster. In the evening we dined with Mr. and Mrs. Phillipps to meet much the same people we had met before. Their house is some little distance from the town on the borders of the Rand in a wild and solitary position, very much esteemed for the view to be obtained in the daytime. After a very good dinner served in a very hot room, I had a game of billiards

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with Mr. Bailey—which I need not say I lost—in a specially constructed billiard-room, and after having thanked my many new acquaintances for their hospitality and kindness, I drove off to the station to take the 9 p.m. train for Bloemfontein.

Johannesburg is one of the wonders of this enterprising, speculative, scientific, progressive, and creative age. Seven or eight years ago it was bare veldt, with one small Dutch farmhouse, at present Captain Rhodes' villa, a stray hut or two and a solitary policeman. Now it is a large city, with a population of 60,000 inhabitants—40,000 Europeans and 20,000 blacks; fine, large, wide streets, lined with stone and brick dwellings, banks, theatres, music-halls, circuses, shops filled with all the latest English and Parisian novelties, a racecourse, and roads that extend for miles, lined by villas surrounded by luxuriant gardens. Trees, as I have said, are rising all over the neighbourhood, eucalyptus especially. Water, which is still a somewhat scarce commodity, is being provided by the erection of waterworks. Not only wealth with its luxuries but comfort and happiness pervade the whole atmosphere, and but for one cruel drawback nothing

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is needed to make the place perfect: owing to the deficient water supply typhoid of a malignant form is endemic and claims many victims.

It may be alleged by the Puritanical critics of so many of our modern movements that all this wonderful creation is to be deplored, being but the outcome of the cupidity, the greed for gold and the selfishness of man; and those who are more pessimistic may add that sooner or later, and sooner rather than later, when the mines of Johannesburg are exhausted, this rank and artificial flower of civilisation will wither and perish, the many thousands of workmen and adventurers will be deprived of their livelihood and will become outcasts on the face of the earth. In reply, first to the pessimists, it may be said that a generation or two at least must pass before the mines are exhausted, that doubtless their prophecy may some day partly become true, and Johannesburg to a certain extent share the fate of Kimberley. But the decline of Kimberley was caused by the rise of Johannesburg and merely produced a displacement of energy and thrift; but even should some further Johannesburg arise in Mashonaland and take away some of this town's inhabitants, even then it may be doubted that it will fall into in-

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significance. Both for geographical and commercial reasons it is unlikely, at any rate for many years to come, that the importance of Johannesburg as a trade centre for South Africa will be interfered with as it has the great advantage of possessing coal mines in its immediate neighbourhood. No doubt the Pharisee is correct in saying that its prosperous and flourishing condition is due to man's greed for gold, and no doubt also this greed leads to some rascality and vice. I have never been to California or Mexico and am therefore unable to compare Johannesburg with an American mining camp, but in Johannesburg there is none of the wild life or the crime of which Bret Harte has given us such a graphic idea; and though there is much undue speculation with its inevitable evils, still its moral atmosphere is singularly unpolluted. Moreover, it must be borne in mind that of the thousands of struggling European families who have found permanent employment there many have been made wealthy and happy. Many Russian Jews who had to fly from the persecution in their native country are living here in comparative ease and in perfect security, following the avocations for which they are best fitted not only with advantage to themselves but to that of their fellow-

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townsmen with whom they work in complete harmony. Schools, hospitals, and charitable institutions of all kinds are springing up for all races and creeds, telling of the philanthropy of the successful miners. But the best proof, it seems to me, of the advantage bestowed on humanity by the rise of Johannesburg is that a barren desert has been transformed into a happy and flourishing community. The almost magical rapidity with which the town has come into existence is all the more wonderful considering that when the gold fields were discovered there was no railway communication with Johannesburg, and the whole of the building material, mining plant and everything else required for the work had to be brought for some hundreds of miles in bullock waggons, some of which, with their teams of twenty oxen, we saw in the market-place. Unquestionably, to appreciate the mental and physical qualities of the British race, its power to organize, to develop and to rule, one must see what they have achieved in Johannesburg which is not even a British colony.

Johannesburg is situated 6000 feet above the level of the sea, and its climate though hot is salubrious and exhilarating. You are familiar with the fact

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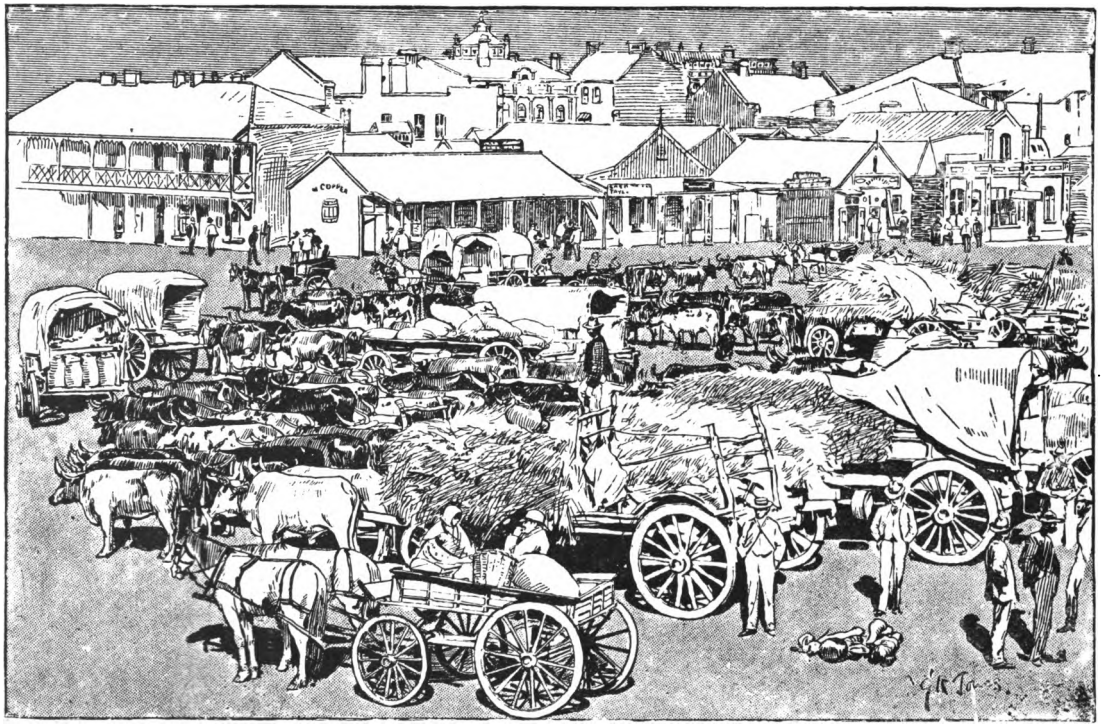

The Market Place, Johannesburg.

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that the Transvaal was declared British territory in 1877. An insurrection of the Boers, led by Messrs. Kruger, Joubert, and Pretorius followed, and in 1881 a British force was repulsed with heavy loss. Shortly afterwards Sir George Colley was defeated and killed at Majuba Hill. But subsequently in face of an increase of the British forces an armistice was agreed upon between the Dutch and Sir Evelyn Wood, who succeeded Sir George Colley, followed by an agreement placing the government of the Transvaal under the suzerainty of the Queen. But finally, under the Cabinet of Mr. Gladstone, the suzerainty was withdrawn and complete independence was restored to the Transvaal. It is not for me on this occasion to comment on the wisdom or otherwise of this proceeding, and instead of reverting to the past I prefer thinking of the future which appears to be tolerably clear.

But for British energy and capital the Transvaal would probably have long remained a comparatively undeveloped and uncivilised country. From being all but bankrupt it has at this moment a million sterling in its treasury. The total white population of the Transvaal is 160,000 souls and at Johannesburg there are 40,000 Europeans, almost entirely British, but these

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Europeans are regarded and treated as aliens, if not as foes. They are not allowed to import firearms and gunpowder, they have no vote, they are not eligible for election to the Transvaal Parliament. On the other hand, the results of their industry, and their comforts, are unmercifully taxed. It is impossible that narrow-mindedness, unselfishness and conservatism in their very worst forms should much longer impede the progress of civilisation. The British population will rapidly increase, and European influence backed up by that of the residents of Cape Colony will not allow things to continue in their present abnormal condition. There may be neither a war of aggression nor a new war of independence, for, as it is, the old Transvaal Boers who detest the vicinity of the British speculator and settler are trekking away and leaving the field clear. It seems probable, in my opinion, that in the Transvaal within a short period a silent revolution will be effected. The first move I should say will be in the reform of the tariff and customs, and the commercial revolution will lead to a political one. Whether the present form of government be nominally retained and the Transvaal flag be preserved is immaterial, but it will either be incorporated with the Cape, or join a

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South African Federation, and to all intents and purposes become a British possession. Some delay may be caused by the respect entertained for and the influence exercised by its present President, Mr. Kruger, but he is a man of seventy, and perhaps even he may not be able to stem the rising tide.

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V.

Bloemfontein.

December 31st:

WE arrived here yesterday — Sunday — at two, after the usual shaky, hot, and tiresome journey (a temporary infliction to which we are becoming inured), through the same monotonous scenery, the same rolling plains, the same scattered farmhouses, and the same swarms of locusts. For the first time in my life I saw mirages. The fields had become lakes with islands and trees rising out of the water. How is it, that in a country where water is so scarce, an optical delusion should produce not only what is not in existence but the very thing that is most wanted? Mr. Lloyd, the Bloemfontein butcher, was not at the station this time, an omission which I did not deplore, and President Reitz having invited us to stay with him, we drove off with his secretary to

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the Presidency. Like Mr. Hofmeyr, the President of the Orange Free State is of German descent, his family having settled two centuries ago at Cape Town, where until he was elected President, he had practised as a lawyer. He is of average height, well-set, with auburn hair, a long, flowing, auburn beard, and a frank and genial expression. His face, however, bears traces of care, for which the state of his health might account, but which must be aggravated by the inadequacy of his means to the demands of his office. His salary is £3000 a year, but in addition to his household expenses, which must be considerable in view of the colossal size of the Presidency and the maintenance of a numerous family—having five sons by his first wife and three children by his present one—he is expected to entertain the residents of Bloemfontein on a large scale, as well as visitors from foreign lands. He introduced me to Mrs. Reitz, a prepossessing young lady who had been a teacher in the Bloemfontein school; a Hollander by birth—the word Dutch being only applied in South Africa to the descendants of the ancient Dutch immigrants. She has presented him with a child every year and I may surmise from

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her appearance is likely to continue to do so for some time to come. She is simple, unaffected, dignified and well able to hold her own. The President showed me over his garden, which in spite of the locusts maintains a cheerful appearance, oleanders, pomegranates, and Marshal Niels being in full bloom, alternating with fig, pear, and walnut trees, shrubberies, and vegetables of all kinds.

At half-past seven we dined; fortunately there were no guests, the party consisting only of the President's family. We did full justice to the repast, especially to a pudding, half African, half Dutch, which did all honour to Mrs. Reitz's culinary talents. Until late in the night we sat talking with President Reitz under the porch of the house, in the mildest and balmiest atmosphere, under a cloudless sky in which the stars were shining brilliantly. The President is a well-read man, and converses most agreeably on the political, scientific, and literary questions of the day, but I doubt if he is a 'strong' man in the usual sense of the word, and in the eyes of the citizens of the Orange Free State he may not contrast altogether favourably in this respect with his predecessor, Mr. Brand. The agricultural

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conditions are similar in the Free State to Cape Colony and the Transvaal. There are no minerals save a few diamond mines, the State is entirely agricultural, which industry, owing to its depressed state, is not particularly remunerative. The average size of a farm, whether freehold or leasehold is from 7000 to 10,000 acres, the rental only amounting to about a shilling an acre, while in the southern parts of the Cape Colony it is much more. Among the different subjects on which we touched was astronomy, of which, however, I know precious little. While discussing the merits of the Southern Cross he told me a story of Mr. Rhodes which is characteristic of the man. Either this year or last, Mr. Reitz and he were seated talking under the same porch and the same sky, and referred to the possibility of the planets being inhabited. Mr. Rhodes remarked that as far as he was concerned he hoped they were not inhabited, for if so the position and importance of man in the universe would be diminished.

This morning, December 31st, we visited the House of Parliament. It is a one-chamber house, and though not as large as that of Cape Town, and

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unprovided with a billiard-table, it is equally out of proportion to the number of its members. On our return to the Presidency we found a Kaffir with a basket containing three baby ostriches which he had just caught on one of the President's farms. Seeing how much I admired the birds, Mr. Reitz presented me with two, which I gratefully accepted hoping to show them off to my friends at home. After luncheon—with a new pudding as good as the one we had had at dinner—and the expression of our thanks for the hospitality we had enjoyed, we drove off to the station.

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VI.

Lovedale.

January 2nd, 1895, Kingwilliamstown:

WE have virtually come to the end of our railway journey for I can hardly reckon the few hours which, after the three-day expedition we are projecting from here, we shall have to undertake before we reach Port Elizabeth. Mr. Milton joined us from Cape Town at the junction at six in the morning on New Year's Day, and will prove a pleasant and useful travelling companion for the rest of our tour. The country through which we passed on leaving Bloemfontein and on the morning of the following day bore a close resemblance to that of the Karroo and the Transvaal, but it changed very markedly as we got near Kingstown—as Kingwilliamstown is called for short by the people. It is more fertile, more varied and more picturesque. Some of

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the rocks are covered with African aloes of such large size that they look in the distance like small palms; many wild flowers cover the ground, the most beautiful of them, a crimson convolvulus, growing all over the banks. Here we are in Kaffraria, the true Kaffirland, which formerly was under British protection but which now forms part of Cape Colony. All along the line we saw the native kraals, not altogether genuine kraals however, as they were built under the supervision of the missionaries for the farm-hands. We were met at the station at Kingstown by one of the local magistrates and Mr. Hennessy, a relative of the late Sir John Pope Hennessy, the only Irishman I saw outside Cape Town. He is second in command of the Cape Mounted Police, which is the only Colonial military force, the imperial troops being garrisoned at the Cape. The Mounted Police have to keep order in a district of 36,000 square miles, with a population that amounts to half the whole population of the Colony. The area of the entire Colony is 250,000 square miles but the country round Kingstown is its most densely populated part, and the work of the constabulary officers, who have to spend most of their

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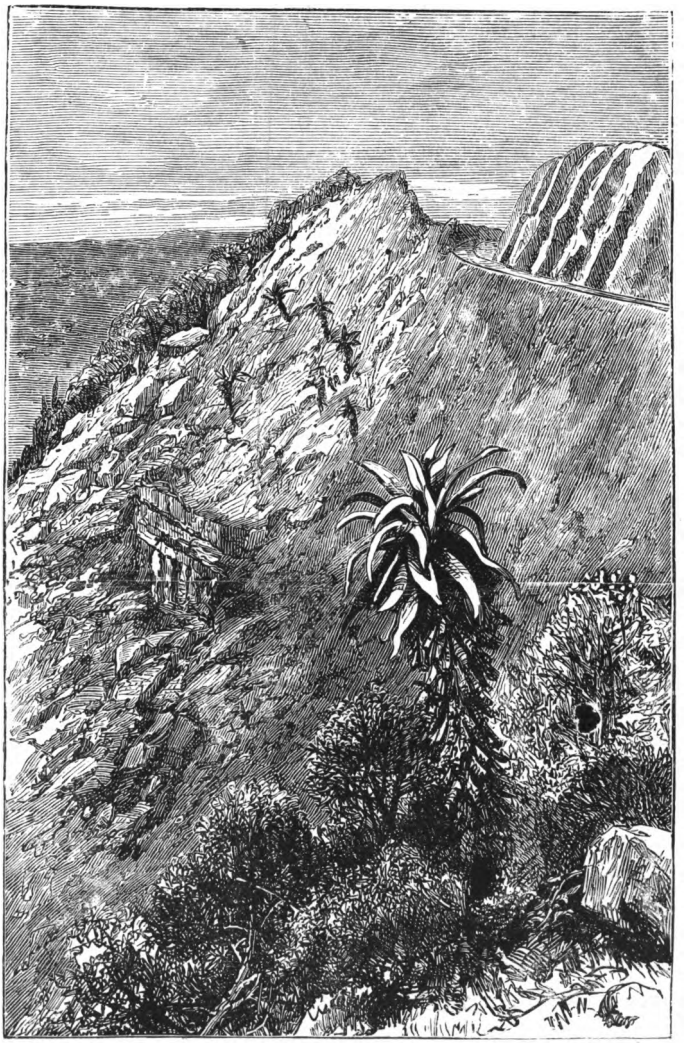

A Steep Embankment.

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lives on horseback riding great distances, is most arduous.

Kingstown is a small, dull and very hot place where the advent of a stranger causes a commotion. We were told wonders of the market which is held in the square at five in the morning, but at the appointed time when I had torn myself out of my bed to have a look at the Kaffirs, the bullock waggons, and the produce they had brought to the town, which is principally sold by auction, there was not as much as one vendor or one purchaser to be seen. We visited the Botanical Gardens, the honours of which were done by Mr. Lister, the head of the Forestry Department, the Curator being away on leave. Mr. Lister is an expert in trees which are being planted in great numbers on the hills, but his knowledge of shrubs or flowers is limited. The gardens are badly kept but full of curiosities, to describe which the Curator would have been most useful. Here, too, many European flowering plants have been introduced. Their colour and luxuriant growth—of the cocks-comb especially —was amazing. An excellent dinner awaited us at the inn, served by a 'boy' who showed us the skins of various snakes he had killed, and with which the

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neighbourhood abounds. Among them was one of a poisonous puff-adder six feet long.

To bed at nine after a very long day.

January 3rd, 1895:

Despite much bodily and mental fatigue January 3rd, 1895, will remain a red-letter day in my recollection, as from first to last it was fraught with new and indelible impressions. At 7.30 a.m. punctually, three conveyances stood at the door of the Central Hotel at Kingstown—a large Cape cart drawn by four horses for our luggage, a Cape 'spider' also drawn by four horses, for our servants, and a South African waggon drawn by six horses with a Basuto driver, for ourselves. The landlady strongly advised us to make use of the spider but Mr. Milton persuaded us to enter the waggon. Alas for us that we acted on his suggestion! We went off at a thundering pace through the town but had barely left it when our six horses jibbed at the ascent of the very first hill. No cajoling, no whipping, no shrieking would induce them to budge. I thought they were simply screws which were shirking their work, but the Basuto told me that they were only too fresh as they

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had not been in harness for some days. Jacob, our driver's name—and a most accomplished driver he is—turned the team sideways, took them at a racing gallop round the hill and having thus thoroughly warmed them, they proceeded well enough. Off we went at a great pace over a road the like of which I had never seen and hope never to see again. It was not a road but a track through fields, over deep gulleys and ruts, and big boulders; metalling these tracks had never known and probably will not know for some time to come. The waggon itself was something the shape of a French *char-à-bancs*, a huge, lumbering vehicle with springs, but, to judge from the rattling of our bones and the *saltos mortales* we made, apparently springless. Though it was roofed we were exposed to the blazing sun and the parching dust. We could neither sit up nor lie down; whatever position we assumed was irksome, having to watch the coming terrors of the road and bend our bodies in unison with the swaying of the conveyance to avoid being jerked out. This acrobatic performance lasted more or less the whole of the twenty-five or thirty miles from Kingstown to Lovedale, which we accomplished in about six hours

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though we out-spanned twice for one and a half hours each time. We passed through endless stretches of scrub, pastures and allotment fields, where the Kaffirs grow maize and the plant from which they make their beer — a somewhat insipid but pleasant beverage not very intoxicating — and over undulating plains with a dark blue mountain range far away on our right. Birds were scarce but here and there the prew displayed the sheen of its indigo plumage, a solitary stork of a kind unknown to me, large hawks, butcher-birds and white-necked crows occasionally arrested our attention. Kraals, this time the genuine native article looking like great bee-hives, were dotted abundantly over the fields. In front of them Kaffirs stood or squatted, some wearing European dress, others no dress at all, but most of them a red blanket from the use of which this tribe are called the Red Kaffirs. We picnicked for luncheon in the bed of a small river under a mimosa bush, as wherever there is water there are trees and shrubs of all kinds. Thickly entwined round the branches of these riverside shrubs was a parasite with drooping tufts from one to two feet long which looked like hay, but was of a vermilion hue. A poet might

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compare them to the long tresses of a nymph, and indeed, it would require no great stress of imagination to take—in the distance and in the twilight especially—the weeping trees for sirens bending and waving their fair hair over the water. When we had finished our repast we walked up to the office of the Resident Magistrate, Mr. Verity, a very smart officer, who was born in the Colony. Having presented me with a bundle of assegais, which the natives are no longer allowed to keep, he fetched old Kama, the chief of the local Kaffirs, who lives in a square European house not far from the church.

Kama, who must not be confounded with the great Khama who spells his name with an 'h,' is the chief of a small tribe numbering 15,000 members. He is a tall, thin, plain old man, and arrived accompanied by his Councillor and several of his men, they all being attired in seedy European costume. We had a 'palaver' in the Court Room where the Magistrate and the Chief usually dispense justice together. Mr. Verity opened the 'palaver' with an address in English, introducing and complimenting us, to which I duly replied. When these speeches had been translated into the Kaffir tongue, the Chief and his Councillor responded with

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two speeches in their vernacular which Mr. Verity rendered into English. Both the Chief and his Councillor urged me to inform Her Majesty personally, immediately on my return to England—the Queen is 'Kukususama' in Kaffir—of their deep loyalty to her Majesty and their entire satisfaction with her rule. I gravely answered that I should not fail to carry out their wishes. The Chief then presented me with another bundle of assegais, in acknowledgment of which I handed him £1 and his Councillor 10*s*. That they were altogether satisfied with this present which they pocketed however with much alacrity my conscience does not permit me to affirm. During this exchange of civilities A. M. 'kodaked' the Chief and the group of tribesmen around him, some of whom seized the stump of a cigar I had thrown away, but no man was allowed more than one puff, and having enjoyed that, he was obliged to pass the cigar on to his neighbour. It was the first occasion on which I had heard the Kaffir language fluently spoken and I was much struck not only with the softness of the language, but of the Kaffir voice. The language is chiefly composed of vowels and the Kaffirs drawl them out in a way that almost reminds one of Italian.

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Chief Kama and Secretary.

From a photograph by A. M.]

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After leaving this village the scenery improved, and fortunately for our poor martyred bodies, the road improved as well. In spite of the continued drought —for the thunderstorms which are of daily occurrence are of no account in this sun-baked land—the extensive garden cultivation which surrounded the Kaffir kraals had a healthy appearance, and the innumerable herds of cattle and flocks of sheep and goats were less lean than might have been expected. On the hilly ground and in the deep vales there were large groups of euphorbia —the 'milk-tree,' as it is called by the natives from its milk-like sap—tall aloes and the inevitable mimosa, but in much diminished numbers. The road now became lively with foot-passengers—Kaffir men, barefooted and carrying their boots in their hands, running and sustaining a good speed for many miles at a stretch, the women, with pitchers or baskets, often heavily laden, on their heads, and bearing themselves not unlike the Egyptian women of the Nile. Boers were trekking along in their waggons; others had outspanned on the roadside, the bullocks peacefully feeding and the men fast asleep on the ground under the waggon. This is their usual place of rest at all times as the waggon shelters them from the sun in the

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day and at night from the chill air. Groups of black families squatted near pools of water in a state of semi-nudity. On seeing us the men hastily drew their red blankets over their shoulders and the women concealed their questionable charms as well as they could, for the law compels them to observe our notions of modesty when in the immediate vicinity of the highway, though in their kraals they are allowed to conform to their own customs. We now beheld Kaffir women for the first time in full dress—a combination of short skirts, a bodice cut very low and a blanket, all dyed the usual red, and their faces plastered with red ochre. Anything more grotesque or gruesome than a red-ochred Kaffir woman cannot be imagined. The cheeks, nose and forehead—in fact the whole face—is caked with this stuff, except for a dark rim left round the eyes and the thick lips, which are allowed to display their natural colour. The faces of these women will haunt me for the rest of my days, and I shall never be able to shake off the fiendish and ghoulish impression they made. This custom of colouring their faces obtains for several reasons. It is their manner of washing, for the ochre, it seems, cleanses them—at any rate, better than soap and hot water; then it is supposed also

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Native Woman on the Road to Lovedale.

From a photograph by A. M.]

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to soften the skin; and, last though not least, it attracts the women's admirers. After all, why should we demur to the habit? It is only their way of rougeing, and now that our own ladies of fashion are so free with rouge why should not the ladies of Kaffraria keep in the running and out-Herod their European sisters? Taste is but a conventional idea. We have our standards of beauty—the Kaffirs have theirs.

At 3 p.m. we arrived at the village of Alice, so named after the late Grand Duchess of Hesse. It is an English townlet in appearance, with cosy white houses, gardens, large plantations of oak and eucalyptus, a bright stream, and a church of no mean proportions, and is inhabited by a considerable number of Europeans. About a mile further on is Lovedale, the most important mission station in South Africa. When at Cape Town Mr. Laing had strongly urged us to visit Lovedale, and promised us a hearty welcome and excellent accommodation at the hands of the chief missionary, Dr. Stewart. We did well to follow Mr. Laing's advice. The short road between Alice and Lovedale might vie with any of our own high roads and we sped along at a splendid pace. A sharp

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turn leads into the grounds of the Mission, where we found a sentinel posted a few yards ahead to signal our approach, and on observing us he ran on to announce our coming. Jacob gave a loud shriek and deftly bringing the long thong of his whip across the backs of the leaders, our six horses galloped more furiously than ever, the huge waggon swinging round the sharp corner perilously near the gate. Boys dressed in a kind of blue uniform stood like guards along the private road to the Mission House. They had been slaves who were rescued from an Arab dhow by H.M.S. *Osprey* four years ago on the east coast of Africa. We next saw a crowd of Kaffirs of both sexes draped in red blankets, but Jacob galloped through the midst of them unheeding. Close by stood a second large batch of natives in European dress, the red-blanketed Kaffirs being still heathens while the trousered ones are Christians. At last we pulled up with a jerk and a bump in front of the Mission House, on the threshold of which stood Dr. and Mrs. Stewart with their fellow-missionaries, whilst a crowd of natives, both heathen and Christian, pressed forward, gazing and muttering unintelligible sounds. In the background thickly flowering bushes and green trees formed a happy frame to this rare picture.

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Lovedale Institution.

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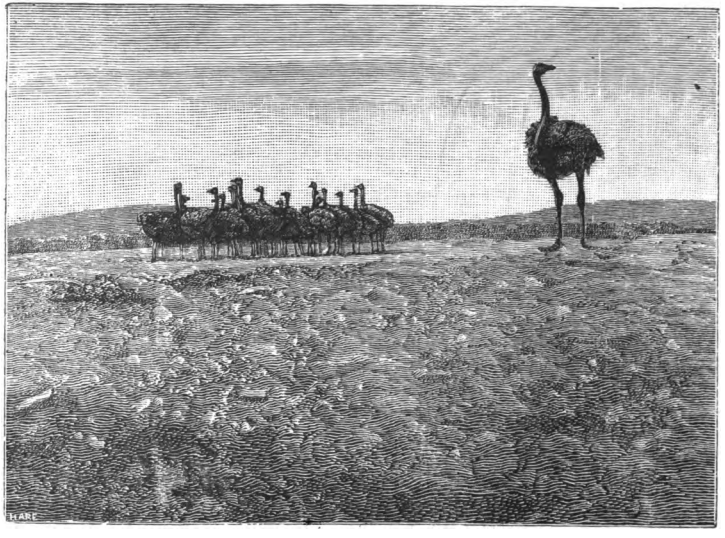

Mr. Douglass's Ostrich Farm.

From a photograph by A. M.]

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have to be artificially fed on mealies and prickly pears. This prickly pear is now spreading so fast that it is becoming a great nuisance, and the ostriches, who, as you know, are not remarkable for wisdom, do not know how to avoid the thorns, so that in passing through the bushes they often lose an eye, if not both eyes. The paddock is but a portion of the rough country which is enclosed with a wire fence. The process of feeding, though simple was curious. A huge waggon laden with mealies and prickly pears cut into small bits moved slowly along a grass drive, and black men threw the food from it to the birds. About 250 ostriches went behind in twos and threes picking up the food as they strutted in a long file like soldiers on the march. The moment the birds were assembled—for they had been driven in from all parts of the paddock — Mr. Douglass at once exclaimed that three birds were missing, and he was right, for after a minute the trio turned up. I asked him how he could know and count them so quickly. 'Does not a huntsman know his hounds?' he replied; 'I know my birds.' The birds were perfectly tame and good-tempered, and took no notice of us. In the breeding time, however, they are

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savage; the cocks sometimes kill each other and they will attack you if you are foolhardy enough to go within reach of them, striking forwards and upwards at you with their great hoofed feet, ripping you open, and the only way to escape from an infuriated bird is to fly into a mimosa bush, whose huge thorns the ostrich dare not face. On one occasion Mr. Douglass had to remain in this somewhat undignified position for upwards of an hour, the bird glaring at him all that time. Their hatching customs are peculiar. The hen sits on the nest in the daytime, the cock at night, and the male bird is so punctual in his habits that if the hen happens to be late he hunts for her and drives her back to her duties. Our host told us that the birds require no drink. He believes that they became used to abstaining from water because their ancestors invariably fell a prey to the lions and leopards as soon as they went to the rivers to drink. But to assist their proverbial digestion, they swallow pebbles which grind against each other until they become pulverised into an innocuous dust. He invited us to take hold of a bird and lay our heads against its side to hear the rattling of the stones in its inside, but though the breeding time was

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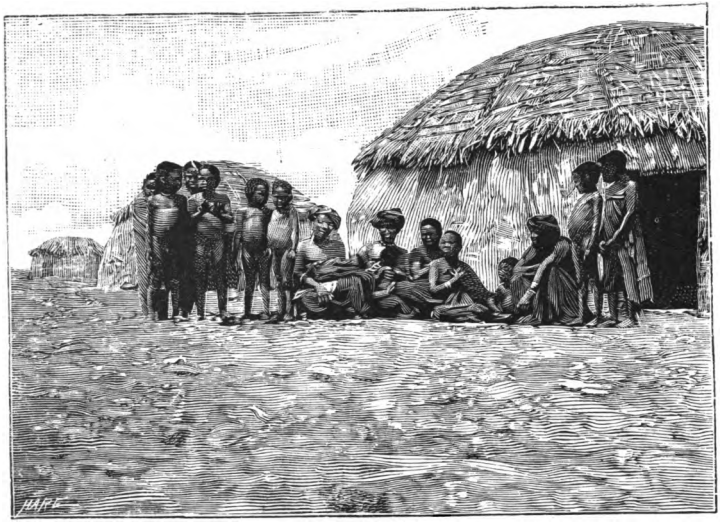

Native Group on Ostrich Farm.

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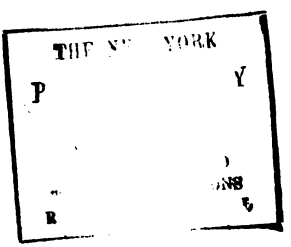

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virtually over and the birds looked meekly at us, we prudently declined the offer. We were then asked to walk a mile and see a hen hatching her eggs, but the temperature had risen to 100° in the shade, as we found out on reaching the house, and there being no shade in the paddock we preferred to return home.

After inspecting the store-room where the ostrich feathers are kept for sale we went to luncheon. In the intervals of the many good courses which Mrs. Douglass had ordered for her visitors, her husband gave us the statistics of the ostrich farm. He owns or farms 7000 acres of land, with 600 head of cattle, and 550 ostriches. During the last eleven years he has made an average of 9½ per cent. clear profit in ostrich-farming, taking into account the cost of the land and all the expenses of the farm, though he does not charge himself with rent. The ostrich lives to the ripe old age of 100 but after he is twenty years old his feathers deteriorate in quality. The best feathers are obtained from the wing of the male ostrich and are sold wholesale on the spot at from two shillings to half-a-crown a-piece (I believe in London they are sold for a guinea each), and Mr.

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Douglass could not be induced to part with any to us despite our request. Cattle-farming is unprofitable and yields about sixpence or at most a shilling per acre. This average of 9½ per cent. on ostrich-farming may not be maintained for Australia, California and Egypt are competing largely in this industry.

After luncheon we rested awhile, and then had another long chat with our host about the missionary work, the Glen Grey Bill, and Mr. Rhodes's achievements as a Minister. On these subjects Mr. Douglass expressed very much the views I have already noted. Mr. Douglass is a great talker, his words flow on in an incessant stream, but of him I must repeat what I said of Dr. Stewart — a more hospitable, energetic, hard-working, sanguine and persevering man you could not find, and on bidding him farewell, I silently prayed that his ostriches might prosper and multiply and not be beaten out of the field by their transatlantic and transpacific rivals, and that his gallant sons will find careers and professions suitable to their tastes, and meanwhile shoot many a koodoo, a springbok, a leopard, and a baboon.

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VIII.

Grahamstown.

January 6th:

We reached Grahamstown early in the evening and we put up at an old English inn, now kept by a young German couple. Frau ——— I am sorry to say I have forgotten her name— has hair that was nearly golden, eyes that might have been blue, and a complexion that was almost creamy. She was in a great state of bustle and trepidation, as having recently taken the inn, she and her husband had had much trouble in getting things square and straight. This and much more she explained sitting beside us while we were having our dinner.

Grahamstown, which was intended at one time to be the seat of Government and the capital of South Africa, is called the 'City of the Saints,' partly because

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of its having a cathedral, a bishop, and the best educational and theological institutions in the Colony, but also on account of the real or assumed saintliness of its inhabitants. It lies in a hole—and a very hot hole it is—is surrounded by thickly wooded hills, has a splendid avenue down its main street, and the only botanical garden worthy of the name in the country. To this garden we went the morning of our arrival, but as at Kingstown, the Curator was away on leave, and we had to be content with the company of a most inefficient gardener—inefficient, at any rate, in his information about the horticultural treasures. Still, he pointed out an oak-tree which though only planted about seventy years ago, is as gnarled and stately as some English oaks that date from the Conquest; an Australian coral-tree that when it sheds its leaves, puts forth spikes of crimson blossom, from which it derives its name; a large, dark-blue convolvulus with pink stripes from Zanzibar; and a new hybrid scarlet passion-flower, of which he promised to send me some seeds.

From the gardens we went to the Museum. Unfortunately, our time was too limited to examine it thoroughly. The Curator for a wonder was at hand,

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and he hurriedly showed us specimens of those curious parasitic insects, some of which in shape and colour are like the leaves, others like the veins of the leaves on which they live, their identity being so complete that the most experienced eye could not distinguish one from the other. They remain motionless all day on the leaves but at night they go forth in search of their food. This provision of nature ensures them security from their winged and other foes. Then the Curator drew our attention to a case that contains a small portion of the trunk of a tree. Inside the trunk was a hornbill hatching her eggs; outside on a branch stood the male bird feeding the hen through a narrow crevice in the roof which he had built over the top of the nest to guard its inmates from the intrusion of snakes. A similar nest with its two birds had been promised to the Curator and he offered to send it to me when put in order—an offer which I gladly accepted.

At a junction at which we were delayed for an hour we experienced a violent thunderstorm, and the rain poured down in buckets. Punctuality is not a feature of the South African railways, to which the axiom does not and apparently need not apply that

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time is money, for they keep no time and make much money. On humbly suggesting to some of our South African friends that their railway system might be improved, they replied—not without a sneer and a touch of pompous indignation—that I should have travelled in the Colony a few years ago and have seen and felt what locomotion was then like. But I did not travel in the country a few years ago and can only judge of what travelling is there now, and I maintain that it could and should be improved, not only for the personal comfort and convenience of the inhabitants but as an attraction to European travellers. As long as the trains crawl and the cars shake as they do now and no food but bad tea and coffee, unripe fruit and suspicious-looking sandwiches are to be obtained over distances of many hundreds of miles, but very few persons from the other side of the Equator will be tempted to visit the country for pleasure.

At Port Elizabeth we found Captain Webster waiting at the station. He hurried us on to a tender in which we at once left for the roads where the *Dunottar Castle* was lying at anchor. When we thought of her former numerous and gay company she now presented almost a deserted and dismal appear-

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ance. While we were reading the letters and cables the Captain had brought us and making ourselves comfortable in our cabins, the siren rang out, she weighed anchor, and off we went in the darkness on the Indian Ocean.

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IX.

Cape Town Again.

January 7th, 8th, 9th:

THE voyage of thirty hours from Port Elizabeth to Cape Town though short was very unpleasant. The sea near the Cape of Good Hope, on this eastern side especially, since the days of Bartholomew Diaz has been known for its terrors. Of terrors we experienced none but a heavy sea confined Mr. Milton and me to our berths. Poor Mr. Milton is a pitiful sailor and when I visited him in the course of the day, though feeling somewhat queer myself and full of sympathy for a fellow-sufferer, I could not help smiling on seeing him as green as grass, his head swathed in wet bandages, and complaining of the hateful screw.

On Monday, January 7th, we landed at Cape Town at 9 a.m., and proceeded at once to Mr. Laing's office

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to thank him for his good advice and kind services. Much to my regret, when I told him of Mr. Reitz's present of ostriches, he informed me that the exportation of these birds was forbidden under a fine of £100 a head. This being too high a price to pay for two chickens who might not survive the voyage, I resolved to offer them to Lady Loch for the menagerie at her summer residence. In the course of the afternoon we had tea with Lady Loch, and without being wished to be thought a Lovelace, I must confess that the sight of the pretty and well-dressed young ladies was by no means unwelcome. Diamond and gold mines, Kaffirs and kraals, ostriches and baboons have their merits, but a bevy of bright English girls in muslin and ribbons, and even more mature ladies with a dignity of their own, are to say the least, more pleasing to the eye. Whilst the youthful members of the company were playing at tennis, I was introduced to various notabilities of my own respectable age, but again owing to the shortness of the time—wherever we went and whatever we saw our time was always too short—I could only exchange a few words with each of them. First, there was the Bishop of Cape Town, the head of the South African clergy, and Mrs. Koopans the leader of Dutch

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society, a widow, childless and aged, a *grande dame* in the true sense of the word and altogether a very clever and remarkable lady. She is thoroughly conversant not only with the present condition but with the past history of the country, and drew my attention to the writings of Dr. Dapper who over two centuries ago described the ruins and mines and the various resources of the vast regions now known as Rhodesia, But I had to part with Mrs. Koopans to be presented to Mr. Sauer, the Leader of the Opposition, who impressed me as being a gifted and clever man, and who chatted on the same subjects as had Mr. Douglass —the Glen Grey Bill, the labour, the Dutch and the railway questions, but with views of his own and more authority. Lady Loch's other guests were so numerous, and our talk was so desultory, that their names have gone clean out of my memory, and I have but a vague reminiscence of the smart frocks and pretty faces of the fair, jumbled up with the frock coats and sedate mien of the sterner sex.

On the following day we returned to Government House for luncheon, and met Sir Henry de Villiers, the Chief Justice of Cape Colony, and, when lunch was over, Khama, the greatest living Kaffir chief, who

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is now on a visit to the Governor. Attired as a European, the Kaffir—an old Kaffir especially—is a scarecrow. Our clothes sit on him stiffly, strangle his movements, and harmonise ill with his dusky complexion. Barefooted, draped in his red blanket, old Khama would look far better than in a black jacket and trousers. Yet even in these he preserves some of his natural dignity, and shows that he is a leader of men and should be addressed as such. A black interpreter translated the compliments we exchanged with each other, after which we took leave of Sir Henry and Lady Loch and drove to Constantia. Mr. Laing had given A. M. a letter for the manager of the vineyards, but, on arriving at his house, we were told that a Company meeting was being held there and we should have to wait until it was over; so, thinking that we were not too welcome, we turned back. In the days of my childhood Constantia wine was considered a great luxury; since then, however, it has gone out of fashion. For this the ravages of the phylloxera and the diminished care bestowed on its fabrication are accountable. We were amply compensated for not having visited the vineyards by our drive, with its beautiful woodland scenery and its

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peeps over Table Mountain, the sea, and the plains, past villas of all sizes and all styles with gardens all aglow with bloom, and small villages thoroughly Dutch in their trim neatness.

On our way home we called on Sir Henry and Lady de Villiers at their very pretty villa at Wynberg. Sir Henry is the descendant of a noble Huguenot family which emigrated to the Cape after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. He is tall, spare, sedate, and dignified, is every inch a gentleman, and considered one of the ablest men in the Colony.

In the evening we dined at the City Club with Mr. Hofmeyr and Mr. Graaf. Though the party numbered only fourteen, the banquet lasted two hours, and we toasted each other in flowery language, piling up the 'butter' in unmeasured quantities. I was seated between Mr. Hofmeyr and Sir Thomas Upington, and opposite Mr. Kotze, Chief Justice of the Transvaal—a clever, bright, genial, and unaffected gentleman, known for his enlightened views and his rigid impartiality in deciding the delicate questions that arise out of the friction between the Dutch and English residents of the Transvaal. I should have been very glad of the opportunity of conversing with Mr.

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Hofmeyr and Mr. Kotze, but the talk was monopolised by my right-hand neighbour, Sir Thomas Upington. A little gentleman, with a pinched, pale face, black eyes, and glossy hair, he fails to convey the notion that he has been Prime Minister, the best orator in the Colony, and is considered one of the best conversationalists in Cape Town. He is now a judge. An Irishman and very proud of his native country, he held forth in a voice which he modulated with would-be dramatic effect, and treated us to a few specimens of Irish humour which delighted his friends but somehow failed to make on me the same impression as they did on them. In his opinion apparently brevity is not the soul of wit, for the two or three stories he related took up the best part of the dinner; and the evident consciousness of his superior talents, which he ineffectually disguised by an assumed tone of humility, rubbed me the wrong way. Do not think me ill-natured for making these comments on a distinguished statesman who did his best to please, and whose efforts, being a little out of sorts, I may not have duly appreciated.

On Wednesday, the 9th, we did some shopping, and at two o'clock went on board the *Dunottar Castle*,

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after having taken an affectionate farewell of Mr. Milton, whose unceasing kindness and good company I shall always gratefully remember. At four o'clock, having shipped the mails, we left South Africa, never, I fear, to see it again.

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X.

From Cape Town to Teneriffe.

January 15th:

A SLIGHT indisposition, the result of the incessant racket of the last three weeks, which confined me to my cabin for the first two days after our departure from Cape Town, and a lack of material are responsible for a break in my diary.

Repetitions rarely afford any interest. We are glad, it is true, to repeat the voyage with the same captain and officers, in the same vessel with its unequalled comforts, and to a certain though a very limited extent with the same passengers, but we are not likely to meet with any adventures, or to have any new impressions; we can no longer become excited at the sight of flying fish or porpoises and unknown constellations, whilst the everlasting blue sea and blue sky and the never-varying routine are painfully trying.

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The inevitable Sports and Amusements Committee has been duly constituted, but it performs its work without zest, and the company joins but languidly in the revels. There is none of that subdued emotion which pervaded the whole atmosphere of our ship on the voyage out to the Cape, and which might be compared to that which animates and thrills an audience on the 'first night' of a play. Instead of the joyous expectation of seeing a new land and a new order of things, and a sanguine disposition to accept the trivial annoyances that are inseparable from a long voyage, we fret at the length and the monotony of the day, and become once more preoccupied with the more serious and engrossing thoughts of the duties of life to which we are returning. Fortunately the trade winds are helping us on; we have been making runs of 390, 400, and 404 knots, and if all goes well we shall reach Teneriffe on the expected day, the 21st inst.

I have been keeping much to myself and my books. Victor Hugo's ten volumes of *Les Misérables* have beguiled many a tedious hour; *Alone in Mashonaland*, written by the editor of a Pretorian newspaper, amused me greatly with its humour and its blood-curdling

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adventures; and *Motley's Rise of the Dutch Republic* is now doing good service. But I am not suffering from the blues nor have I turned hermit. No, I play quoits with the ship's officers and see much of the company. Mr. Cooper and Mr. Hagard, who had been indulging in a *dolce far niente* at Cape Town while we were visiting the Colony, are again with us, and two members of Sir Henry Loch's household, Captain Ponsonby and Mr. Fort. On the eve of our departure Sir Henry Loch's *aide-de-camp* had received the distressing intelligence that his father, Sir Henry Ponsonby, had had a paralytic seizure. He at once resigned his office, and is going home, in the hope of finding his father still alive. The loss of so faithful, useful, and devoted a servant will grievously affect the Queen. Captain Seymour Fort, of late Sir Henry Loch's secretary, was for some years a magistrate in Mashonaland has travelled about all over the world and his description of the birds and vegetation of New Guinea makes my mouth water. Amongst the forty first-class passengers there are all sorts and conditions of men and women, and not a few who in their way have interesting, curious, or remarkable traits. There is Mr. Stokes,

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also a Mashonaland magistrate, full of South African information; Mr. Wirth, an Australian circus proprietor and rider, who says that Americans of both sexes are the most accomplished circus performers; a Birmingham manufacturer whose performances on the trapeze would bring down the Alhambra; a French engineer who wears knickerbockers, and when he is in want of exercise dances a *pas seul* on deck that would make a Vestris look green; and Mr. S——, the lessee of several theatres in Cape Colony. Gossip credits him with having run away from home at the age of twelve, then taken service in an American barque, after leaving which he projected a filibustering expedition to New Guinea which the then Lord Derby nipped in the bud, and finally led a wild, roving, but profitable life until he engaged in his present profession. This is his twenty-seventh voyage between the Cape and England, and it is not likely to be his last, as he travels backwards and forwards with the members of the various theatrical companies whom he engages in England. Perhaps the most sensational passenger is a young lady in the second-class, whose name I must discreetly withhold. She is not unlike Mrs. Langtry, and has large,

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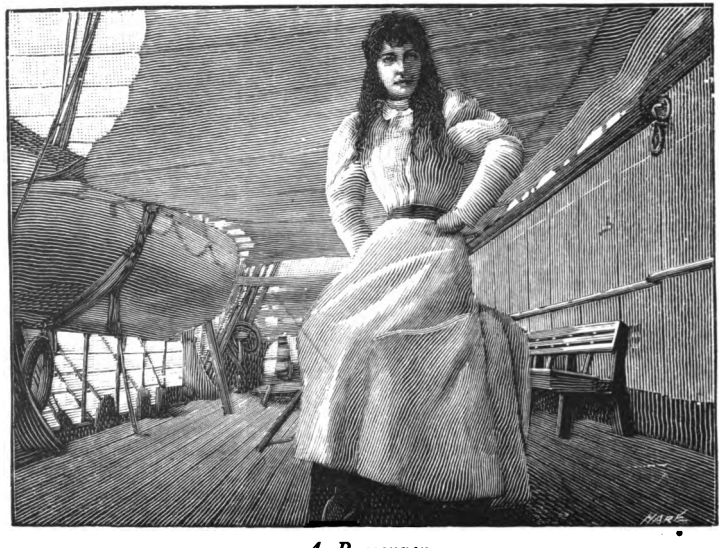

A Passenger.

From a photograph by A. M.]

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grey, almond-shaped eyes, a pale oval face and dark hair that rolls in undulating waves over her shoulders. When I first saw her it was in the moonlight and I thought her beautiful. Her eyes seemed to glisten with an inner glow, and deepen with a mysterious emotion. My disillusionment was great the next morning when the sun revealed an ordinary, untidy, and common English girl. Still, she is unquestionably very pretty, and round her hangs a tale. Mr. S—— had engaged her in London to perform in *tableaux-vivants* at a Johannesburg music-hall, but on arriving at Cape Town she found a cable—whether from the Colonial Office or from her father I was unable to make out—stating that she was under age, not even eighteen years old, that she had run away from England, and ordering her home at once; an order which the Cape Government endorsed. The infuriated S—— thus defrauded of his star and her passage-money, swears that the contract was duly signed by her mother, that she is over twenty years of age—the ladies on board affirm that she is at least twenty-seven—and that the cable was forged by a whilom admirer of hers who for reasons of his own allowed her to depart, but who as soon as she had left wanted her

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back again. On that unfortunate individual Mr. S—— vows he will be revenged. Whatever the truth of this tale may be, the young lady looks very peaceful and contented, flirts handsomely with our young bloods, and makes some of the members of her sex rather jealous.

Last but not least in the list of the passengers, I must mention the general favourite—a small baboon, whom our captain obtained at Durban and intends presenting to the Zoo. Poor little ape! he will never again have so good a time. He is petted and fed by all of us all day long on bananas, oranges, grapes, pineapple and peaches and every conceivable European and African delicacy. It will be a wonder if he survives these orgies. Yet, in spite of all his comforts and luxuries, he pines for liberty, and occasionally breaks away from his chain and his little hut, climbs up the rigging and rushes along the deck, causing a stampede amongst the ladies and children. He shows a most ungrateful disregard of the amiable overtures of the latter by tearing their frocks, and even biting them when they venture too near him. During his last escapade he made his way over the side of the ship through an open port

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into a cabin, where he was secured after no small trouble.

One excitement we have had, and a greater one than the capture of the baboon. We were all but shipwrecked — well perhaps not shipwrecked but disabled—and to be disabled in mid ocean would have been appalling. Our recollection of the fate of the Union liner *Moor* made it doubly appalling. Her engines broke down some weeks ago off Cape Verde, and her passengers had to spend a whole fortnight in one of the unhealthiest parts of the West Coast of Africa until they found a small vessel to convey them to Cape Town. To my infinite regret I knew nothing at the time of what was happening, being engrossed in my book in the Captain's cabin. The ship had received a great shock which sent some of the ladies and gentlemen bounding out of their seats. They rushed to the bulwarks and to the stern, and lo! and behold! there was a huge patch of blood on the water. We had struck a whale! It was no mistake, nothing less than a whale. There was no sunken reef to account for the shock, nor could so much discoloration have been due to a wound inflicted on anything smaller than a whale; in corroboration of

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which view it was affirmed that one had actually been seen. Sea serpents have often been seen by the most trusted and experienced sailors, yet sceptics deny their existence, but in our case the whale was no myth, and had the monster collided with and broken the propeller instead of being hit by the keel the result must have been awkward.

The Amusement Committee have chosen the two hottest days for the sports as to-day we are crossing the line. Truly the robustness of the Briton is prodigious! No wonder he rules the best part of the world.

January 19th:

The sports on the whole have been rather a failure, not because of the heat for our athletes exerted themselves as vigorously as if the glass were below zero, but it seemed to me as if there were no 'go' in the proceedings. Some of the games, however, were amusing—'chalking the pig's eye' especially created much merriment.

Fortunately the voyage is now coming to an end; the heat is most oppressive and the company is ghastly dull. Some of our party have enlivened us by quarrelling over their whist, and for one whole day

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none of the players were on speaking terms with each other. One called his partner a beggar, which drew forth a volume of retaliatory abuse ; another exclaimed to his adversary that he was not a gentleman, but the individual so stigmatised being of a meek disposition forbore from replying, and silently withdrew into his tent—I should say, his cabin. At the very outset of our first voyage I felt convinced that a prolonged rubber would lead to wrangles and 'words,' and I therefore judiciously resisted the temptation of taking a hand.

January 20th:

Land is not yet in sight and we have seen but one ship, a small French coaster. But the sunsets afford much compensation for the monotonous blue of the sea and the sky. Do not be alarmed. I shall not inflict on you a description of their gorgeous coruscations, which at times stirred up strange emotions. Of one however I must say a few words—which you may skip if you choose and I shall not be offended. To be accurate, it it was not exactly a sunset for the sun had already vanished. A pack of clouds gathered on the horizon so black and heavy that it seemed they must break into a storm. These clouds rolled over each other in front

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of a silvery haze that spread out like a veil, through which rose the moon, and between the clouds which parted at times, the moon poured a flood of light on the sea. Then again the clouds would close up and obscure her, and then again they would fitfully part and allow her to be seen. I almost imagined I saw in that struggle between light and darkness the contending forms of my good and my evil genius. But the result was satisfactory for finally the clouds melted away, and when the moon had fully risen peace and quiet reigned in the starry skies and on the listless ocean.

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XI.

Teneriffe.

Orotava, Tuesday, January 22nd:

WE arrived early yesterday morning at Santa Cruz, too early indeed for the convenience of the pilot and the pratique officers who kept us waiting some time, much to the annoyance of our captain who was anxious to put us off—we were the only two passengers for the Canaries—and proceed quickly to Madeira. For some time before we reached Santa Cruz, I was on deck feasting my eyes on the land, the trees, the houses and the small dots I fondly conceived were human beings. The coast, which is not unlike that of Madeira, is mountainous and covered with buildings. The Peak was invisible, being enveloped in clouds, though it is often to be seen forty miles out at sea.

Spaniards are never in a hurry. '*Mañana*' (to-

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morrow) seems to be their equivalent for our 'all right,' and a person of a hasty or irritable disposition can hardly be recommended to travel in any portion of his Catholic Majesty's dominions, unless it be to take a lesson in patience. Still, everything comes to those who know how to wait, and by nine a.m. the usual harbour formalities had been accomplished. The captain's dog, a large black spaniel who had borne his long imprisonment on board with exemplary patience, tore round the deck with joy when the gangway was lowered. But the happy sensation of treading the firm earth was not yet to be his. Anxious as I was for that sensation myself, I was sorry to part from the ship which had become like a home ; for of the seven weeks that have elapsed since we left Southampton we have spent over four on the *Dunottar Castle*, and sorrier still to part from the captain and from our officers—as with some of these very good fellows we had been on the friendliest terms.

Santa Cruz is a small Spanish town with a small harbour and a small trade, and dirty, like all Spanish towns. The English Hotel, which is kept by a Portuguese who married an Englishwoman, was at one time the residence of a Spanish Grandee, and has

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preserved in its patio a marble fountain, a relic of its ancient splendour. It represents a Venus coming out of a shell supported by nymphs and dolphins, and is worthy of more æsthetic surroundings. In the same patio, the walls of which were a blaze of bougainvilliers, we were delighted to find lying on small tables copies of many English papers with the last news from home.

Meanwhile our carriage was announced. No inhabitant of or visitor to Teneriffe who has any claim to self-respect, drives less than three horses abreast. We were told we could never get up the steep hills with less than five, so off our carriage grandly went drawn by its five steeds. Our servants followed with a team of three, and a mule cart with our luggage.

Our coachman—whom I was afterwards told had been dragged from his box to undergo a process of scraping and soaping while we were at breakfast—drove away at a great speed through a gaping crowd over the ill-paved streets of the town. We soon reached Laguna, and then proceeded at a more leisurely rate. The weather was dull and on the high ground we encountered a Scotch mist which compelled us to shut up our trap, but on descending again to the valley the mist cleared away, and though the Peak

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remained invisible, we were afforded a fair glimpse of the country.

Orotava lies on the other side of the island from Santa Cruz, the two being connected by an excellent road cut right through the Island. Perhaps on a clear day we should have thought highly of that drive and of the scenery, but the touch of the sun was required to lend its enchantment to the sea which was of a dismal grey, to the hills that are denuded of trees, and to the fields which are all market gardens. Such an extent of *la petite culture* I have not seen even in France. The small fields are enclosed by stone walls, cover the plain and reach right up to the summit of the mountains which are some thousands of feet high. Enough vegetables are grown here to make our Parish Councils green with envy. We arrived about midday at Orotava, at the English Grand Hotel which is situated on high ground, about a mile from the sea above Puerto Orotava (the port), a townlet built in rectangular streets of small square houses. It is only a port in name for there is no harbour and no shipping, and only a short mole capable of affording protection to small craft. High up on the opposite side from the hotel, about six miles,

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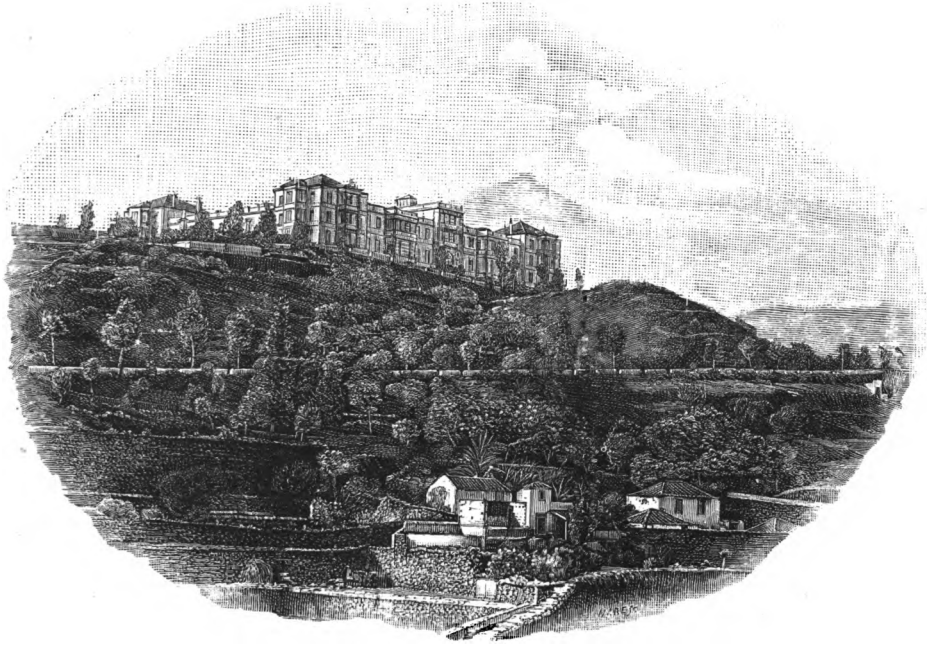

The English Hotel at Orotava.

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I should say, as the crow flies, on the slope of the hill stands Villa Orotava (the town) at the foot of a long range of mountains. The hotel, a huge building forming three sides of a square, with flower-beds in the centre and spacious gardens, is in the hands of a Spanish company, but seems to be managed by the housekeeper, an Englishwoman, an ex-hospital nurse, and the wife of the German head waiter. She is buxom and fair, a regular little busybody, and has already overwhelmed us with attentions of all kinds, offers of drives, rides, and excursions, and even entertainments to be got up for our benefit. We had some little difficulty in convincing her that we had been surfeited with sightseeing and hospitalities, and all we required and longed for was complete idleness and rest.

The day wore on but the mule-cart with our luggage failed to appear, and had not even arrived when dinner was announced so that we had to take our places in the saloon in our travelling clothes, which clashed distressingly with the smart regulation dress of the company. Most of the gentlemen wore evening coats and white ties ; the ladies satins and silks. One antique and portly dame, who hailed from Clapham, fascinated me so completely that I was hardly able to

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bestow the attention it deserved on the bill-of-fare — though because of her cap not of her personal attractions. To do justice to this cap is beyond my descriptive powers but I would fain make the attempt. It was a composition of white flowing lappets, pinned to a brown wig, and embroidered with white jet which glittered in the electric light; from the centre rose three tall ostrich plumes that waved gracefully over her brow. The Prince of Wales's crest must have been the pattern for this remarkable headgear.

No news of the mule-cart. Has it been upset into the sea, or has the conductor bolted with our things? We fumed and fretted in vain, and went to bed abusing *las cosas españolas.*

January 23rd:

Our mule-cart arrived at six a.m. The man in charge offered no explanation of the delay and it would have been useless to expect any from a Spaniard. He will not be bustled or hurried, and can wait; why should we not wait as well? So long as each Spaniard can procrastinate and put off till to-morrow what he ought to do to-day, Spain will have to wait for better times.

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The clouds had disappeared during the night, and the sea and the hills were brilliant in the golden light. The Peak rose in all its glory but though it is 12,000 feet high, and dominates the whole island, from the immediate neighbourhood it shows to little advantage as it is largely hidden by a long, flat, and ill-shaped line of hills.

Our first expedition was to the Botanical Gardens, to which we proceeded on donkeys, and where we found the Curator, a Swiss who rejoices in the name of Wildpret. Poor old fellow! an enthusiastic horticulturist, he lamented the parsimony or penury of the Spanish exchequer which leaves him without a peseta for the improvement or even the maintenance of his establishment, for the dilapidated condition of which he tearfully apologised. The bougainvilliers, however, came to his rescue. Familiarity with this creeper never breeds contempt, for not only is its growth luxuriant and its hues brilliant, but there are twelve varieties which flower at all times of the year.

In the afternoon we took a long drive. Though the colouring is less vivid and it is far less densely populated, the country reminds me of some portions of the Riviera, but instead of pine woods and orange and

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lemon groves cornfields and market gardens cover the land, relieved by occasional groups of palms, the indigenous Canariensis. Here and there, generally by the side of a cottage, stands a dragon-tree. The fame of this tree which is but a giant dracena, cannot be due to its beauty, nor to any special originality of form, but probably rests on its extraordinary longevity. The oldest and largest specimen in the island has recently been blown down and was chopped up into small bits, which are preserved as relics. Humboldt asserted that it must have been 6000 years old—older consequently than the creation of the world according to Biblical records. The dragon-tree is neither graceful nor imposing but has a weird look, and in the distance the branches of the stem, which form a dense green canopy, have a faint resemblance, if not to a dragon, yet to a cluster of coiled snakes.

We passed many villages. In front of their white-washed abodes were groups of Spaniards. The men are tall, lithe, and dignified; the young women as a rule graceful and handsome, though the more mature are repulsive old crones. We passed many country folk, chiefly women, all gaily dressed—far more so than the Spaniards of Spain, and far less

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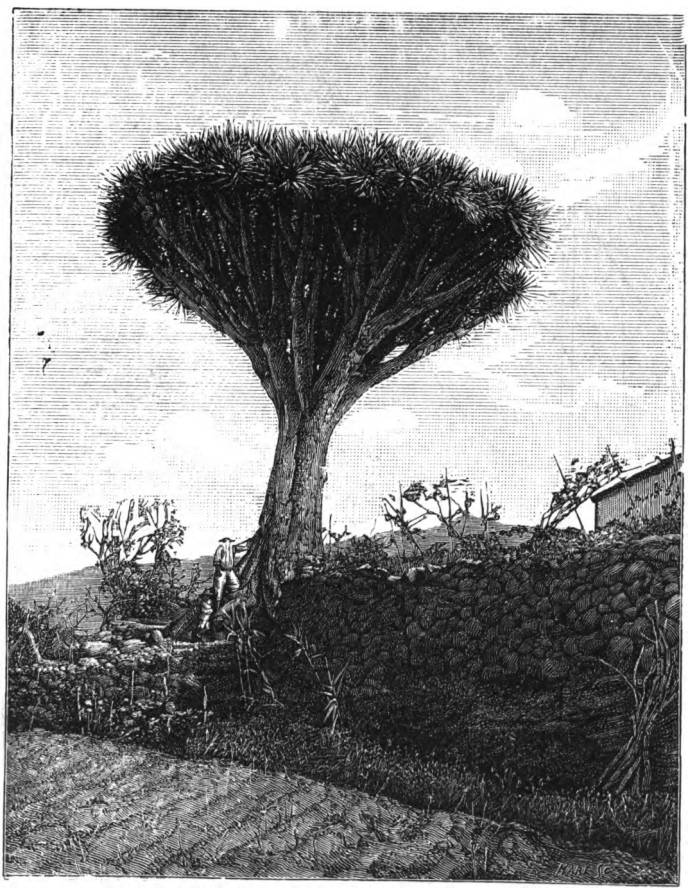

Dragon Tree, Teneriffe.

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moody. They were all chatting or singing and laughing and joking with us; but being ignorant of the language, we could only respond with a nod or a wave of the hand. The men are swarthy, the women are pale and dark-eyed; but both are fairer than the pure Iberians, for which, perhaps, as well as for their comparative geniality of temper the mixture of blood may account. When Teneriffe was conquered at the beginning of the sixteenth century the Spaniards, instead of exterminating the native Gaunches, as they did in the other Canary islands, spared and intermarried with them, and no gentler race than these white aborigines is said to have existed.

January 24th:

There was a 'festa' yesterday in the neighbourhood. Festas are of no uncommon occurrence in Catholic countries. In Spain as in Italy every Saint has his festa; of the procession, the ceremony, the costumes and the local colour, our little housekeeper promised wonders. So we ordered a trap, drove down to the Puerto and up again to the grounds of a Mrs. Hubbard where the Saint has his chapel. There was a procession, but there were no banners,

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no richly draped statues carried by the worshippers. Mass was said in the chapel but there was no special feature in the ceremony; the dresses had come direct from Manchester, and the only local colour was that of the blue sea. Mrs. Hubbard was nowhere to be met —maybe she was in her shoe—but her garden was merry with the holiday folk, who strayed in and out of the chapel, idled in the bright sun, bought cakes which old women hawked round in large baskets, and pursued us for pesetas.

January 25th:

There is not very much to be done here. There is only one high road, and when you have driven on it once to the left and once to the right you have explored it sufficiently. Riding is the order of the day. Every one here rides—natives and visitors, the doctor, the tradesman, and the workman. We, too, shall ride and canter along the iron roads or grope our way amongst the loose stones of the lanes. Boating is out of the question as the wind at this side of the island is generally high, and there is a heavy swell on the sea as we can perceive from the fact that a small coasting trader which is lying at anchor

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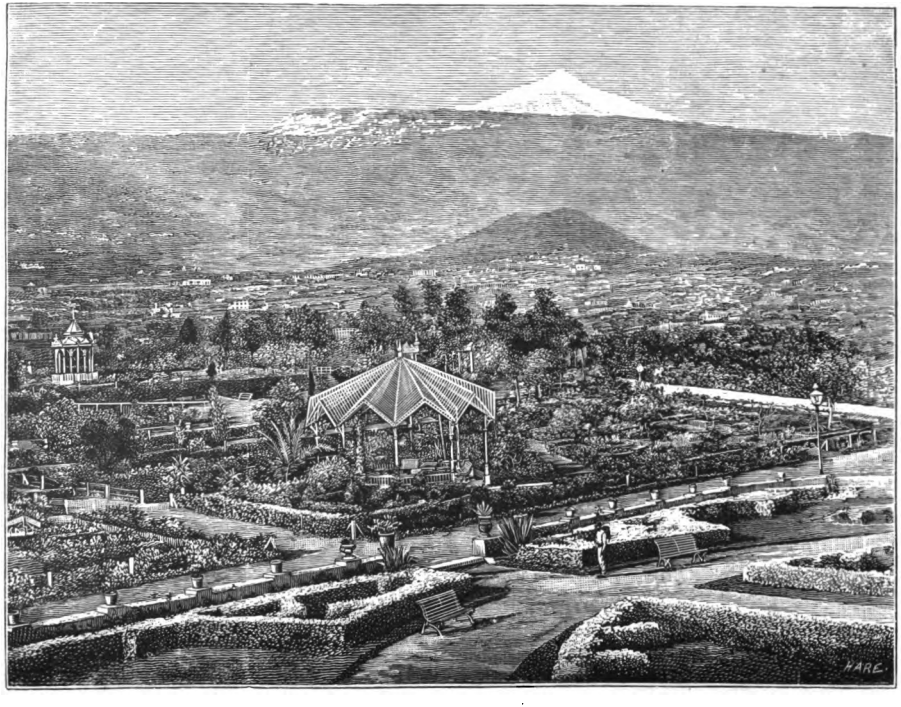

The Gardens of the English Hotel, Orotava.

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near the mole rolls as if she must capsize. Orotava is a health resort only and is recommended chiefly to persons suffering from pulmonary complaints, who are well satisfied with the unemotional and uneventful routine of the daily life in consideration of the relief from their sufferings which this unique climate affords. But the stray visitor who is passably well feels and thinks differently, and however he may welcome the rest, some little variety would be highly acceptable. All the resources of Orotava, unless you choose to ascend the Peak or make a twelve-hour excursion, are centred in and around the hotel. There is no lack of indoor material comforts, and there are outdoor conveyances of every style. Horses and donkeys stand all day at the door for the robust, landaus and pony traps for the less energetic, and hooded and cushioned hammocks slung on poles and carried on the shoulders of two stalwart bearers, for the frail and sick. But the stiff and conventional atmosphere hangs over this that hangs over every other foreign settlement or watering-place exclusively patronised by the Briton. In the hotel gardens there are no snug restaurants—no kiosks with vendors of sweetmeats, papers, and toys, as in France; and there is

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no band, as there would be in Germany. For your meals you have to conform to rules almost monastic in their punctuality and solemnity, during which the harassing cough of an invalid is only to be heard above the droning hum of hushed voices. There is no casino and the mere thought of gambling or dancing at Orotava is enough to make one shudder; so, unless you linger in the drawing-room where your musical proclivities may be indulged by listening to English or Scotch ballads sung by old spinsters, you have nothing to do in the evening but to retire at nine.

A speciality of Orotava is its frogs. They are never to be seen—at any rate, I have not discovered any as yet; but at night they make themselves heard with a vengeance. This infliction does not arise from any dampness in the ground, which consists of lava and is perfectly dry, but from the numerous large tanks and water-courses constructed for purposes of irrigation, in which the frogs repose in the daytime and in which they croak at night.

January 26th:

I rode yesterday to Villa Orotava. My barb though somewhat groggy and lazy was surefooted, and

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when urged on by its Spanish attendant he cantered at a fair pace, while the man ran alongside without showing any sign of fatigue. The town stands, or rather sleeps on the slopes of the hills; a large, ancient city, with a Mansion House, a Cathedral, a Convent, and many antique houses adorned with long wooden balconies supported by wooden columns which in turn support a projecting roof. These balconies and columns are richly carved; some are almost works of art. The pavement of the wide, silent streets, where the rattle of wheels is seldom if ever heard, is overgrown with grass, and the piazzas might be taken for lawns. The windows of the houses are closed all day with heavy shutters like doors, being made in square panels. At the sound of a footstep outside one of these panels rises like a trapdoor, and discloses the face of a brown-eyed maiden. As I rode up the still main street I thought of the fairy tale. Orotava has fallen asleep long long ago and I wondered by what magic touch it would be revived.

January 27th:

Yesterday I rode up again to Villa Orotava accompanied by A. M. After ascending the main

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street we turned round a sharp corner into the Alameda, as the public garden or square is called which is to be found in every Spanish town. Even the Puerto boasts of an Alameda. I was struck dumb, for I should not have believed that Orotava seen from any point of vantage could make such an effect. At some little distance below is the sea, flecked with white horses tossing the surf into foam on the dark volcanic rocks of the shore; high up in the background the long range of mountains, massive and purple, form a huge crescent from east to west, where towers the snow-clad Peak. Close by, in a line with the Alameda gardens, yawns a wide gulf—a rocky ravine that long ago before Spaniards or Guanches were thought of, Nature tore like a great gash in the hillside. Its depths are a wild tangle of greenery; on the opposite side, on the broken and choppy ground that sinks into the plain, is the town—a maze of quaint buildings rising in tiers above each other and scrambling pell-mell out of sight: some look giddily into the gulf, others turn towards the sea or stare at the Peak; here and there is a campanile; low down the Cathedral, with its great dome.

Some of the houses are of a fair size, others are

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mere cottages, but all are covered with the large, round, red tiles peculiar to the Island. All are painted different colours—white, red and buff—stained and mellowed with age and toned down to the softest hues; all have projecting gables and verandahs of carved wood that has darkened to the deepest brown. None are without a terrace or a garden thick with bananas or trees and enclosed by a low wall made of loose uncemented stones all aglow with creepers. Far away at the bottom of the hill stands a palm so tall that he rises over the Cathedral—a giant sentinel that witnessed the Spanish Conquest and now seems to guard Orotava from the intrusion of factories, chimneys, and tramcars, and the many incongruities and vandalisms of our modern civilisation. Not a soul was to be seen, not a sound to be heard while I took in the various features of this unrivalled picture. All around was inanimate, all but the vivid atmosphere and the rank vegetation. Suddenly a hawk of the large species common to the Island hovered over the ravine, gyrated slowly craning its neck towards the abyss—a harbinger of death in this deathlike stillness.

Death, alas! has been busy at home. and on the

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receipt of every cable I tremble lest it should add one more to the long obituary.

But to turn from the dead to the living. Colonel Weathered of the Bucks Volunteers, and one of my colleagues in the County Council, has selected Orotava for his winter residence and has purchased a property of thirty-five acres on which he is building a house within a stone's throw of the hotel. Land here is cheap, the price varying according to the quality of the soil and the amount of irrigation that has been introduced. But it is always a remunerative investment, for even the poorest soil yields three crops annually. In former times the two great industries were cochineal and wine, malmsey, both dry and sweet, and canary, said to have been the sack of Elizabethan times, which was exported in large quantities at a fabulous profit. At the beginning of this century both of these industries fell into neglect: cochineal was superseded by Manchester dyes and dropped from four to one shilling a pound, but wine-growing is being revived. Farming is carried on on the French *metayer* system, the landlord and the tenant dividing the profits, which amount to about £10 on two acres on an assumed rental of about £5. The British farmer and the Boer

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may well sigh on reading of such returns. Labour is comparatively even cheaper than the land, for the wages range from five to ten shillings a week. The staple industry now is fruit and vegetables, bananas and tomatoes being grown in the numerous gardens of the Island, mainly for exportation to England. No wonder that in this land, not of milk and honey, but of bananas and tomatoes, with a climate that hardly varies from one end of the year to the other, the people are happy, contented, and good-tempered.

January 27th:

We have ridden once more to Villa Orotava in order to visit the gardens of the Marchesa de la Quinta Roba—pronounced Rocha—an aged and childless widow, the Marquise de Carabas of the place. Her name is on every one's lips. She spends the winter at Puerto Orotava and the summer at Villa Orotava. On this occasion the town was all alive and astir for the Alcalde had been informed by his son, one of the accountants in the Hotel, of the uuusual event of the visit of two strangers. Despite their hatred of John Bull whom they cannot yet forgive for defeating the Invincible Armada, the

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Orotavians on the bidding of their Mayor turned out in numbers. Nature, all-beneficent in these well-named 'Fortunate Islands,' has done for the Marchesa what art could not have achieved and did not attempt to achieve. The gardens consist of several broad terraces, one above the other, filled with orange and coffee-trees; camelias, bougainvilliers, and roses are in bloom; the whole an unkempt but luxuriant wilderness of verdure and flowers overlooking the town, the sea, and the hills, which in spring-time must be indescribably lovely. Though it has a distinct character of its own, semi-Spanish semi-tropical, the garden reminded me of Verona, and its walls would be a suitable frame to Romeo and Juliet whispering love to each other. When having expressed my admiration of the ancient town the worthy Alcalde looked aghast, and replied that he had cut down some old timber to afford a peep at our Hotel, than which a more garish specimen of practical modern architecture could not be imagined—a blemish to the whole scene. He then added with a sigh that he was longing for a railway to Santa Cruz. This, no doubt, will benefit his fellow-citizens, but those who seek places where the unsophisticated past lingers on, places beautified by the slow

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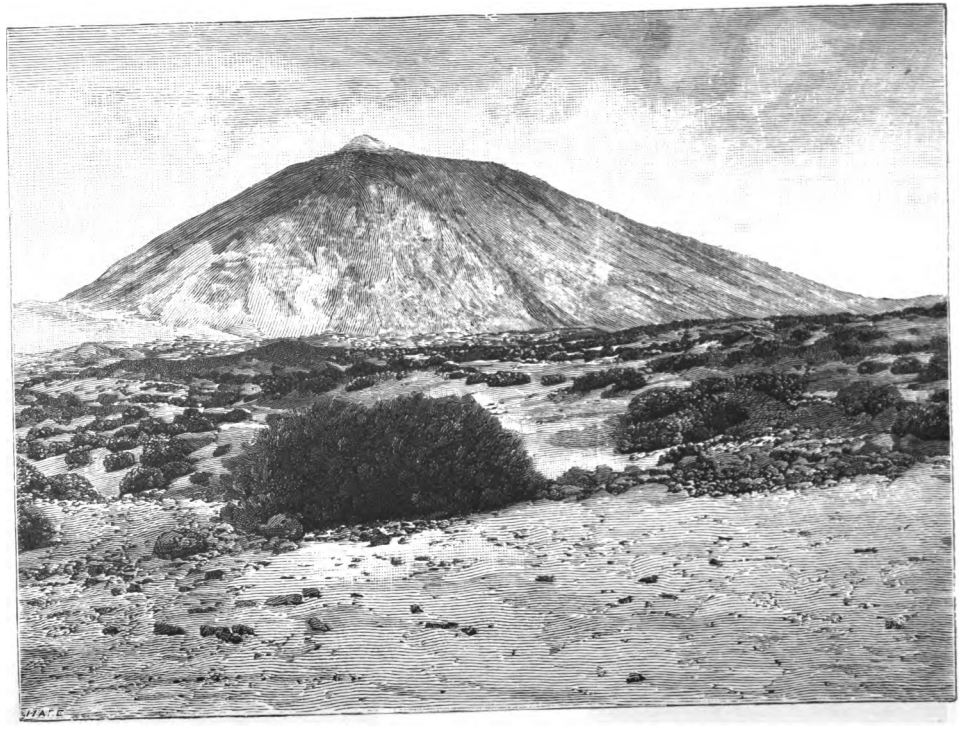

The Peak, Teneriffe.

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growth of centuries and undefiled by the interference of man, whose inhabitants but for their Alcalde, doze peacefully through their lives—these will deplore the day when the first engine rushes into Orotava and wakes it up to the consciousness of the bustle and the cares of the big world far away.

Laguna, January 29th:

Here we are at Laguna, a couple of miles from Santa Cruz, and to-morrow Messrs. Rennie's cargo steamer, the *Dabulamanza* (1600 tons and 200 horse-power), is to convey us to Madeira. During our three hours' drive we almost perished with cold. The climate changed soon after we left Orotava from semi-tropical became semi-arctic, and for the first time since we left England we were glad of our overcoats. But though cold it was clear, and we were afforded a capital view of the Peak. It is colossal and gives the impression of size; but while disclaiming the imputation of being irreverent, I must confess that the Peak looked to me a cross between a plum-pudding and a sugar-loaf. It has neither the majesty of Mont Blanc nor the grace of Vesuvius.

Our landlord here, although the son of a Spanish

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mother and married to a Spanish wife, and has lived here eighteen years, has remained a Briton to the backbone. His head waiter, however, is a true Spaniard as was evident from the strong perfume of garlic diffused by his presence. He said that the Canary Islands are daily becoming more popular, that the traffic with the Continent is steadily increasing, and that the tonnage of the passenger ships using the port of Las Palmas is equal to the entire tonnage of Barcelona, a statement of doubtful accuracy though it must be taken on trust. Not only for the sake of Laguna but of Orotava I hope that many tourists will find their way to Teneriffe; though unless you are an invalid or your nerves are shattered, unless you hate the face of your kind and despise news from home, or are a poet or a painter and are content with the silent contemplation of the beauties of nature, my advice to you is to visit Teneriffe by all means, but think twice before making a prolonged stay at Orotava. Some day, perhaps, a fast and comfortable line of steamers will bridge over the short distance between Santa Cruz and Cadiz; foreigners as well as Britons will cover the island with villas and introduce their luxuries and amenities; weekly if not daily mails will

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keep you in touch with the outer world, and you will be enabled to spend a short and pleasant holiday in a land of which merely to breathe the air is a joy in itself.

Santa Cruz, January 30th:

The *Dabulamanza* is a day late, but we hope to start this evening when she has loaded her cargo. This English hotel is after all merely a kind of pothouse with a bar where the visitors smoke, gossip, drink, and play billiards. It was creaking all night with uncanny noises and buzzing with mosquitoes. An impatient horde of individuals of various nationalities is waiting to be off by the *Dabulamanza*, which cannot possibly accommodate them on board.

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XII.

From Teneriffe to Lisbon.

On board the 'Trojan,' February 2nd:

WE sailed from Santa Cruz on Wednesday the 30th of January at 8 p.m., and reached Madeira before daybreak on Friday the 1st of February in a thunderstorm and a deluge of rain when we had to put back to sea and return some hours later, as our captain would not anchor in the dark. Our voyage in the *Dabulamanza* will long live in my recollection. In the first place she had only ten berths and we were eighteen passengers; in the second she carried no cargo to speak of and was a mere toy on the waves, which tossed her about like a cork; in the third place she was a filthy craft, alive with cockroaches and covered with indescribable dirt. Our poor servants slept anywhere and anyhow; A. M. had the chief mate's cabin, and I the captain's; how the rest of the travellers were put up

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I did not inquire. I remained the thirty-six hours of the voyage in my cabin, dozing the most of the time, and using very bad language to myself. I just caught a glimpse of one of the lady passengers who had come all the way from Natal in the *Dabulamanza*. She was the divorced wife of an English resident in the Colony, and her appearance and demeanour were sufficient warrant for the statement that six co-respondents had been implicated in the suit. Of course she assumed the title and airs of an Italian countess and asserted that she was intimately acquainted with the whole of our peerage.

We remained at Madeira until 3 p.m., but as it was pouring rain we went on board the *Trojan* at once, as she arrived immediately after we did, and never stirred from her deck, inconveniently crowded as it was with Portuguese vendors of wickerwork chairs and tables, linen embroideries, shawls, filagree oraaments, birds, parrots, monkeys, and fruit. The inevitable divers—regular acrobats of the deep—were in attendance and performed the same antics as had amused us so greatly during our former short stay off the Island.

The *Trojan* is one of the oldest of the Union liners and the one in which the Empress Eugenie

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returned to England from her sad pilgrimage to Natal. She is one of the intermediate steamers, but though slow and not over and above clean, is very seaworthy and steady. She is the noisest vessel in which I ever embarked, and in my cabin which is close to the engine-room I obtain no rest. At three in the morning they began washing the decks, and the pumping, scraping, and knocking, and the heavy tread of the sailors overhead would give a fit to a cat or a hippopotamus. The captain, with whom I meekly remonstrated, kindly promised to put off the operation to-morrow to a more rational hour.

February 3rd:

It has been blowing a 'moderate' gale for the last thirty hours, but the wind was aft and though we rolled fearfully and lunched and dined with the 'fiddles' on the table we were free from all pitching. In the midst of this storm an unfortunate Portuguese woman had been delivered of a still-born child. Her appearance is lamentable, she is sitting on deck with the doctor, who will endeavour to convey her ashore. For here we are now in the Tagus. We have just crossed the bar and are in sight of Lisbon, waiting for the pratique

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and custom-house officers and the tug which is to convey us to the quay. Lisbon is smiling down from her sunny heights and looks radiantly beautiful. There is the small castle of Belem, a gem of mediaeval architecture, but cruelly backed by gasworks and chimneys; in the distance, far up the river, is a forest of shipping, and all along the shore of the broad estuary, which reminds me of the Bosphorus, palaces and churches rise above each other and glitter in the sun as if they were of marble.

I shall now close this diary. I shall have nothing further to record, and shall be content to dwell on the recollection of the many rare sights I have seen and the interesting persons I have met. My dismal and discouraging presentiments on leaving England have been unrealised, for nothing could have been more enjoyable than my South African trip; it had only one drawback—it was too short. Let me recommend my friends who have kindly perused these pages to follow my example, and, instead of spending their every autumn at a German watering-place or at Cowes or in the Highlands, to make a tour in Cape Colony; and, though they be no better sailors than I am, they will not suffer much, even in the Bay of Biscay

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from the ill-temper of the cross-grained god Neptune, in ocean liners as roomy and comfortable as the *Dunottar Castle*. But they should select either our spring or autumn, and not our winter, for the expedition, for then the heat is terrific although even then the climate is so healthy that sunstroke is unknown in South Africa, and so exhilarating that they will do more in a day than they would at home in a week. They will enjoy an unwonted sense of freedom and independence, and will not meet any parties of Cook's tourists to offend their fastidious eyes and ears. But, unless their time is limited, as was the case with us, they should allow themselves five or six weeks, stay longer than we did at Cape Town and Johannesburg, visit Pretoria, make a more extended tour in the eastern part of the Colony, and, if possible, visit Natal. Of Naples it has been said, 'See it and die.' Of Cape Colony I should say, 'See it and live;' for, if you are an Englishman, you will not only enjoy the beauties of the Cape peninsula, but be inspirited on beholding the grand labours of your countrymen in a land far off from your own. Of the immediate future of Cape Colony

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I must speak with some reserve. In our time the expansion and greatness of a colony depend much on its natural resources and the homogeneity of its inhabitants. The natural resources of the old colony are but scanty as is proved by its trade and exports; and the diversity of the races making up its population is a serious obstacle to amalgamation. Moreover, there are provinces as large as one of our European kingdoms which though under British protection or influence, contribute but little to the general weal. To take a single instance, Basutoland, which is called the Switzerland of South Africa. Its natives are the most capable of all the black tribes and its soil is so fertile that it might grow enough wheat to supply the wants of the whole of South Africa; but our sway over Basutoland is not much more than nominal, and communication with it is so defective that its products cannot be exported. But the day will come when the British flag will wave over the whole of that portion of the southern hemisphere, and Boers, Dutch, Britons, and Kaffirs, after having gained a better understanding of each other as well as of their own interests will derive the same advantages

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from being under the same laws and sharing the same duties. With the statesmen who are now at the head of affairs this process may be more quickly furthered than you might anticipate, and to appreciate these men you should see them at the wheel. There are many problems to be solved in the accomplishment of the work that has to be done, and perhaps the key will be found in the development of Rhodesia. I have no personal knowledge of Rhodesia and the information I gathered at the Cape is but an inadequate supplement to what we all know of it. Though tropical, it is said to be on the whole healthy; and, though but partially explored, it is known to be fertile; though at a great distance from Cape Town, it is being connected with the capital by railways; and, though fast becoming populated by the white man, it is still a happy hunting-ground for the sportsman. But whether its mines will yield the same abundance of gold as those of the Transvaal, though the most trusted engineers believe they will, has still to be proved. There are great uncertainties and great difficulties to be met with and conquered; but the adventurous spirit of our people, their pluck, their

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endurance and their energy have surmounted in the past greater obstacles than will beset them if they bring these qualities to bear on Rhodesia, and enable them to found another flourishing empire in those vast regions which are brimful of a mysterious fascination.

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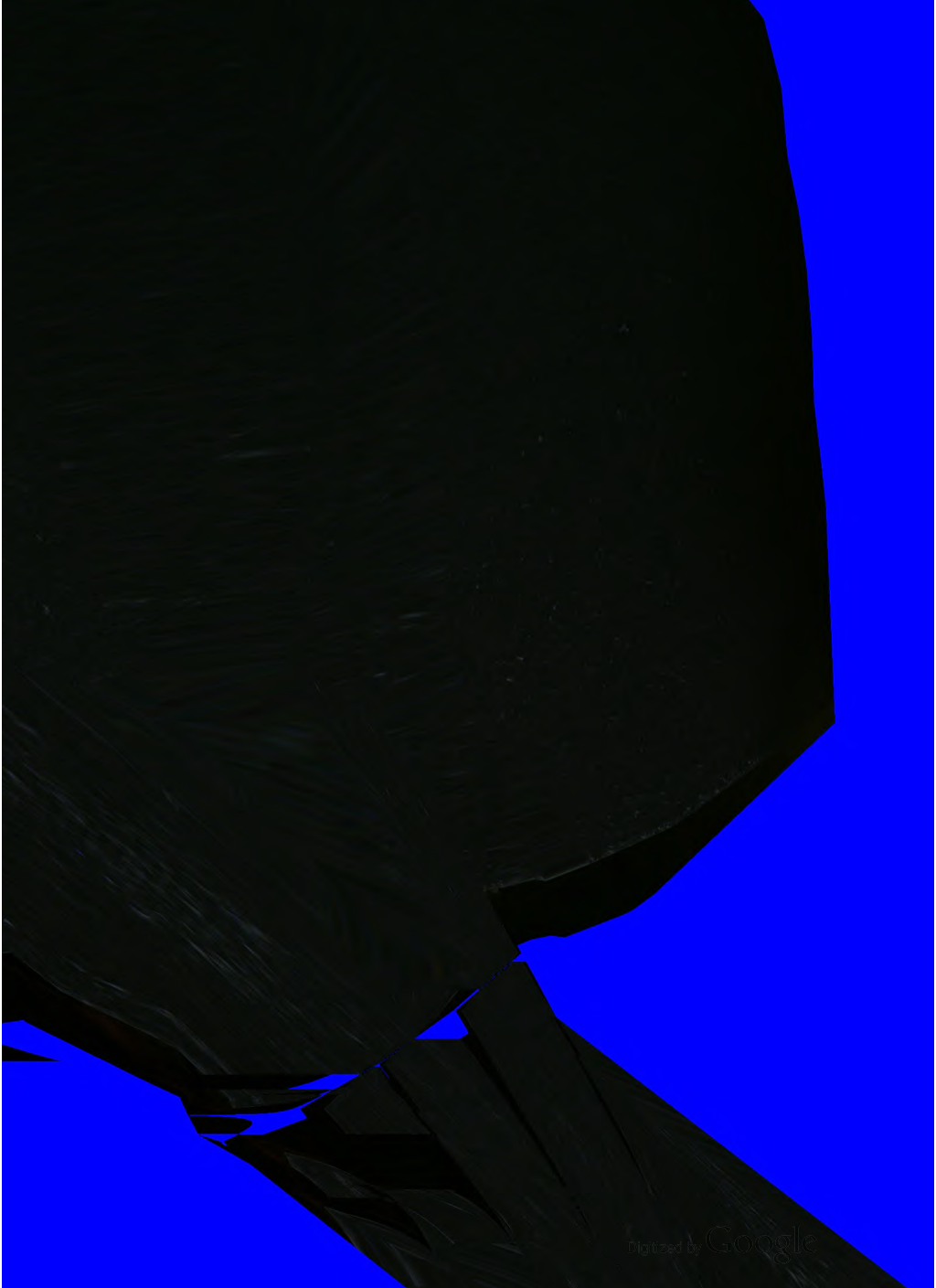
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